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THE NEGRO IN LITERATURE AND ART

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The Negro in Literature and Art

in the United States

BY

BENJAMIN BRAWLEY

Author of "A Short History of the American Negro"

REVISED EDITION

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1921

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TO MY FATHER

EDWARD MacKNIGHT BRAWLEY

WITH THANKS FOR SEVERE TEACHING
AND STIMULATING CRITICISM

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PREFACE

The present volume undertakes to treat somewhat more thoroughly than has ever before been attempted the achievement of the Negro in the United States along literary and artistic lines, judging this by absolute rather than by partial or limited standards. The work is the result of studies in which I first became interested nearly ten years ago. In 1910 a booklet, "The Negro in Literature and Art," appeared in Atlanta, privately printed. The little work contained only sixty pages. The reception accorded it, however, was even more cordial than I had hoped it might be, and the limited edition was soon exhausted. Its substance, in condensed form, was used in 1913 as the last chapter of "A Short History of the American Negro," brought out by the Macmillan Co. In the mean time, however, new books and magazine articles were constantly appearing, and my own judgment on more than

one point had changed; so that the time has seemed ripe for a more intensive review of the whole field. To teachers who may be using the history as a text I hardly need to say that I should be pleased to have the present work supersede anything said in the last chapter of that volume.

The first chapter, and those on Mr. Braithwaite and Mrs. Fuller, originally appeared in the *Southern Workman*. That on the Stage was a contribution to the *Springfield Republican;* and the supplementary chapter is from the *Dial*. All are here reprinted with the kind consent of the owners of those periodicals. Much of the quoted matter is covered by copyright. Thanks are especially due to Mr. Braithwaite and Mr. J. W. Johnson for permission to use some of their poems, and to Dodd, Mead & Co., the publishers of the works of Dunbar. The bibliography is quite new. It is hoped that it may prove of service.

BENJAMIN BRAWLEY.

North Cambridge, August, 1917.

THE NEGRO IN LITERATURE AND ART

THE NEGRO IN LITERATURE AND ART

I

THE NEGRO GENIUS

IN his lecture on "The Poetic Principle," in leading down to his definition of poetry, Edgar Allan Poe has called attention to the three faculties, intellect, feeling, and will, and shown that poetry, that the whole realm of aesthetics in fact, is concerned primarily and solely with the second of these. *Does it satisfy a sense of beauty?* This is his sole test of a poem or of any work of art, the aim being neither to appeal to the intellect by satisfying the reason or inculcating truth, nor to appeal to the will by satisfying the moral sense or inculcating duty.

The standard has often been criticised as

narrow; yet it embodies a large and fundamental element of truth. If in connection with it we study the Negro we shall find that two things are observable. One is that any distinction so far won by a member of the race in America has been almost always in some one of the arts; and the other is that any influence so far exerted by the Negro on American civilization has been primarily in the field of aesthetics. To prove the point we may refer to a long line of beautiful singers, to the fervid oratory of Douglass, to the sensuous poetry of Dunbar, to the picturesque style of DuBois, to the mysticism of the paintings of Tanner, and to the elemental sculpture of Meta Warrick Fuller. Even Booker Washington, most practical of Americans, proves the point, the distinguishing qualities of his speeches being anecdote and brilliant concrete illustration.

Everyone must have observed a striking characteristic of the homes of Negroes of the peasant class in the South. The instinct for beauty insists upon an outlet, and if one can find no better picture he will paste a circus poster or a flaring advertisement on the walls. Very few homes have not at least a geranium

on the windowsill or a rosebush in the garden. If also we look at the matter conversely we shall find that those things which are most picturesque make to the Negro the readiest appeal. Red is his favorite color simply because it is the most pronounced of all colors. Goethe's "Faust" can hardly be said to be a play primarily designed for the galleries. One never sees it fail, however, that in any Southern city this play will fill the gallery with the so-called lower class of Negro people, who would never think of going to another play of its class, but different; and the applause never leaves one in doubt as to the reasons for Goethe's popularity. It is the suggestiveness of the love scenes, the red costume of Mephistopheles, the electrical effects, and the rain of fire that give the thrill desired—all pure melodrama of course. "Faust" is a good show as well as a good play.

In some of our communities Negroes are frequently known to "get happy" in church. Now a sermon on the rule of faith or the plan of salvation is never known to awaken such ecstasy. This rather accompanies a vivid portrayal of the beauties of heaven, with the

walls of jasper, the angels with palms in their hands, and (*summum bonum!*) the feast of milk and honey. And just here is the dilemma so often faced by the occupants of pulpits in Negro churches. Do the people want scholarly training? Very often the cultured preacher will be inclined to answer in the negative. Do they want rant and shouting? Such a standard fails at once to satisfy the ever-increasing intelligence of the audience itself. The trouble is that the educated minister too often leaves out of account the basic psychology of his audience. That preacher who will ultimately be the most successful with a Negro congregation will be the one who to scholarship and culture can best join brilliant imagination and fervid rhetorical expression. When all of these qualities are brought together in their finest proportion the effect is irresistible.

Gathering up the threads of our discussion so far, we find that there is constant striving on the part of the Negro for beautiful or striking effect, that those things which are most picturesque make the readiest appeal to his nature, and that in the sphere of religion he receives with most appreciation those dis-

courses which are most imaginative in quality. In short, so far as the last point is concerned, it is not too much to assert that the Negro is thrilled not so much by the moral as by the artistic and pictorial elements in religion.

But there is something deeper than the sensuousness of beauty that makes for the possibilities of the Negro in the realm of the arts, and that is the soul of the race. The wail of the old melodies and the plaintive quality that is ever present in the Negro voice are but the reflection of a background of tragedy. No race can rise to the greatest heights of art until it has yearned and suffered. The Russians are a case in point. Such has been their background in oppression and striving that their literature and art are to-day marked by an unmistakable note of power. The same future beckons to the American Negro. There is something very elemental about the heart of the race, something that finds its origin in the African forest, in the sighing of the night-wind, and in the falling of the stars. There is something grim and stern about it all, too, something that speaks of the lash, of the child torn from its mother's bosom, of the dead body

riddled with bullets and swinging all night from a limb by the roadside.

So far we have elaborated a theory. Let us not be misunderstood. We do not mean to say that the Negro can not rise to great distinction in any sphere other than the arts. He has already made a noteworthy beginning in pure scholarship and invention; especially have some of the younger men done brilliant work in science. We do mean to say, however, that every race has its peculiar genius, and that, so far as we can at present judge, the Negro, with all his manual labor, is destined to reach his greatest heights in the field of the artistic. But the impulse needs to be watched. Romanticism very soon becomes unhealthy. The Negro has great gifts of voice and ear and soul; but so far much of his talent has not soared above the stage of vaudeville. This is due most largely of course to economic instability. It is the call of patriotism, however, that America should realize that the Negro has peculiar gifts which need all possible cultivation and which will some day add to the glory of the country. Already his music is recognized as the most distinctive that the

United States has yet produced. The possibilities of the race in literature and oratory, in sculpture and painting, are illimitable.

Along some such lines as those just indicated it will be the aim of the following pages to study the achievement of the Negro in the United States of America. First we shall consider in order five representative writers who have been most constantly guided by standards of literary excellence. We shall then pass on to others whose literary work has been noteworthy, and to those who have risen above the crowd in oratory, painting, sculpture, or music. We shall constantly have to remember that those here remarked are only a few of the many who have longed and striven for artistic excellence. Some have pressed on to the goal of their ambition; but no one can give the number of those who, under hard conditions, have yearned and died in silence.

II

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

ON one of the slave ships that came to the harbor of Boston in the year 1761 was a little Negro girl of very delicate figure. The vessel on which she arrived came from Senegal. With her dirty face and unkempt hair she must indeed have been a pitiable object in the eyes of would-be purchasers. The hardships of the voyage, however, had given an unusual brightness to the eye of the child, and at least one woman had discernment enough to appreciate her real worth. Mrs. Susannah Wheatley, wife of John Wheatley, a tailor, desired to possess a girl whom she might train to be a special servant for her declining years, as the slaves already in her home were advanced in age and growing feeble. Attracted by the gentle demeanor of the child in question, she bought her, took her home, and gave her the name of Phillis. When the

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

young slave became known to the world it was customary for her to use also the name of the family to which she belonged. She always spelled her Christian name P-h-i-l-l-i-s.

Phillis Wheatley was born very probably in 1753. The poem on Whitefield published in 1770 said on the title-page that she was seventeen years old. When she came to Boston she was shedding her front teeth. Her memory of her childhood in Africa was always vague. She knew only that her mother *poured out water before the rising sun.* This was probably a rite of heathen worship.

Mrs. Wheatley was a woman of unusual refinement. Her home was well known to the people of fashion and culture in Boston, and King Street in which she lived was then as noted for its residences as it is now, under the name of State Street, famous for its commercial and banking houses. When Phillis entered the Wheatley home the family consisted of four persons, Mr. and Mrs. Wheatley, their son Nathaniel, and their daughter Mary. Nathaniel and Mary were twins, born May 4, 1743. Mrs. Wheatley was also the mother of three other children, Sarah, John, and Susan-

nah; but all of these died in early youth. Mary Wheatley, accordingly, was the only daughter of the family that Phillis knew to any extent, and she was eighteen years old when her mother brought the child to the house, that is, just a little more than ten years older than Phillis.

In her new home the girl showed signs of remarkable talent. Her childish desire for expression found an outlet in the figures which she drew with charcoal or chalk on the walls of the house. Mrs. Wheatley and her daughter became so interested in the ease with which she assimilated knowledge that they began to teach her. Within sixteen months from the time of her arrival in Boston Phillis was able to read fluently the most difficult parts of the Bible. From the first her mistress strove to cultivate in every possible way her naturally pious disposition, and diligently gave her instruction in the Scriptures and in morals. In course of time, thanks especially to the teaching of Mary Wheatley, the learning of the young student came to consist of a little astronomy, some ancient and modern geography, a little ancient history, a fair knowledge

of the Bible, and a thoroughly appreciative acquaintance with the most important Latin classics, especially the works of Virgil and Ovid. She was proud of the fact that Terence was at least of African birth. She became proficient in grammar, developing a conception of style from practice rather than from theory. Pope's translation of Homer was her favorite English classic. If in the light of twentieth century opportunity and methods these attainments seem in no wise remarkable, one must remember the disadvantages under which not only Phillis Wheatley, but all the women of her time, labored; and recall that in any case her attainments would have marked her as one of the most highly educated young women in Boston.

While Phillis was trying to make the most of her time with her studies, she was also seeking to develop herself in other ways. She had not been studying long before she began to feel that she too would like to make verses. Alexander Pope was still an important force in English literature, and the young student became his ready pupil. She was about fourteen years old when she seriously began to

cultivate her poetic talent; and one of the very earliest, and from every standpoint one of the most interesting of her efforts is the pathetic little juvenile poem, "On Being Brought from Africa to America:"

> 'Twas mercy brought me from my pagan land,
> Taught my benighted soul to understand
> That there's a God—that there's a Saviour too:
> Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
> Some view our sable race with scornful eye—
> "Their colour is a diabolic dye."
> Remember, Christians, Negroes black as Cain
> May be refined, and join th' angelic train.

Meanwhile, the life of Phillis was altogether different from that of the other slaves of the household. No hard labor was required of her, though she did the lighter work, such as dusting a room or polishing a table. Gradually she came to be regarded as a daughter and companion rather than as a slave. As she wrote poetry, more and more she proved to have a talent for writing occasional verse. Whenever any unusual event, such as a death, occurred in any family of the circle of Mrs. Wheatley's acquaintance, she would write lines on the same. She thus came to be re-

garded as "a kind of poet-laureate in the domestic circles of Boston." She was frequently invited to the homes of people to whom Mrs. Wheatley had introduced her, and was regarded with peculiar interest and esteem, on account both of her singular position and her lovable nature. In her own room at home Phillis was specially permitted to have heat and a light, because her constitution was delicate, and in order that she might write down her thoughts as they came to her, rather than trust them to her fickle memory.

Such for some years was the course of the life of Phillis Wheatley. The year 1770 saw the earliest publication of one of her poems. On the first printed page of this edition one might read the following announcement: "A Poem, By Phillis, a Negro Girl, in Boston, On the Death of the Reverend George Whitefield." In the middle of the page is a quaint representation of the dead man in his coffin, on the top of which one might with difficulty decipher, "G. W. Ob. 30 Sept. 1770, Aet. 56." The poem is addressed to the Countess of Huntingdon, whom Whitefield had served as chaplain, and to the orphan children of Georgia

whom he had befriended. It takes up in the original less than four pages of large print. It was revised for the 1773 edition of the poems.

In 1771 the first real sorrow of Phillis Wheatley came to her. On January 31st Mary Wheatley left the old home to become the wife of Rev. John Lathrop, pastor of the Second Church in Boston. This year is important for another event. On August 18th "Phillis, the servant of Mr. Wheatley," became a communicant of the Old South Meeting House in Boston. We are informed that "her membership in Old South was an exception to the rule that slaves were not baptized into the church." At that time the church was without a regular minister, though it had lately received the excellent teaching of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Sewell.

This was a troublous time in the history of Boston. Already the storm of the Revolution was gathering. The period was one of vexation on the part of the slaves and their masters as well as on that of the colonies and England. The argument on the side of the slaves was that, as the colonies were still English territory, they were technically free, Lord Mansfield having handed down the decision in 1772

that as soon as a slave touched the soil of England he became free. Certainly Phillis must have been a girl of unusual tact to be able under such conditions to hold so securely the esteem and affection of her many friends.

About this time, as we learn from her correspondence, her health began to fail. Almost all of her letters that are preserved were written to Obour Tanner, a friend living in Newport, R. I. Just when the two young women became acquainted is not known. Obour Tanner survived until the fourth decade of the next century. It was to her, then, still a young woman, that on July 19, 1772, Phillis wrote from Boston as follows:

> My Dear Friend,—I received your kind epistle a few days ago; much disappointed to hear that you had not received my answer to your first letter. I have been in a very poor state of health all the past winter and spring, and now reside in the country for the benefit of its more wholesome air. I came to town this morning to spend the Sabbath with my master and mistress. Let me be interested in your prayers that God will bless to me the means used for my recovery, if agreeable to his holy will.

By the spring of 1773 the condition of the health of Phillis was such as to give her friends

much concern. The family physician advised that she try the air of the sea. As Nathaniel Wheatley was just then going to England, it was decided that she should accompany him. The two sailed in May. The poem, "A Farewell to America," is dated May 7, 1773. It was addressed to "S. W.," that is, Mrs. Wheatley. Before she left America, Phillis was formally manumitted.

The poem on Whitefield served well as an introduction to the Countess of Huntingdon. Through the influence of this noblewoman Phillis met other ladies, and for the summer the child of the wilderness was the pet of the society people of England. Now it was that a peculiar gift of Phillis Wheatley shone to advantage. To the recommendations of a strange history, ability to write verses, and the influence of kind friends, she added the accomplishment of brilliant conversation. Presents were showered upon her. One that has been preserved is a copy of the magnificent 1770 Glasgow folio edition of "Paradise Lost," given to her by Brook Watson, Lord Mayor of London. This book is now in the library of Harvard University. At the top of one of

the first pages, in the handwriting of Phillis Wheatley, are these words: "Mr. Brook Watson to Phillis Wheatley, London, July, 1773." At the bottom of the same page, in the handwriting of another, are these words: "This book was given by Brook Watson formerly Lord Mayor of London to Phillis Wheatley & after her death was sold in payment of her husband's debts. It is now presented to the Library of Harvard University at Cambridge, by Dudley L. Pickman of Salem. March, 1824."

Phillis had not arrived in England at the most fashionable season, however. The ladies of the circle of the Countess of Huntingdon desired that she remain long enough to be presented at the court of George III. An accident—the illness of Mrs. Wheatley—prevented the introduction. This lady longed for the presence of her old companion, and Phillis could not be persuaded to delay her return. Before she went back to Boston, however, arrangements were made for the publication of her volume, "Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral," of which more must be said. While the book does not of course con-

tain the later scattered poems, it is the only collection ever brought together by Phillis Wheatley, and the book by which she is known.

The visit to England marked the highest point in the career of the young author. Her piety and faith were now to be put to their severest test, and her noble bearing under hardship and disaster must forever speak to her credit. In much of the sorrow that came to her she was not alone, for the period of the Revolution was one of general distress.

Phillis remained in England barely four months. In October she was back in Boston. That she was little improved may be seen from the letter to Obour Tanner, bearing date the 30th of this month:

> I hear of your welfare with pleasure; but this acquaints you that I am at present indisposed by a cold, and since my arrival have been visited by the asthma.

A postscript to this letter reads:

> The young man by whom this is handed to you seems to be a very clever man, knows you very well, and is very complaisant and agreeable.

The "young man" was John Peters, afterwards to be her husband.

A great sorrow came to Phillis in the death on March 3, 1774, of her best friend, Mrs. Wheatley, then in her sixty-fifth year. How she felt about this event is best set forth in her own words in a letter addressed to Obour Tanner at Newport under date March 21, 1774:

DEAR OBOUR,—I received your obliging letter enclosed in your Reverend Pastor's and handed me by his son. I have lately met with a great trial in the death of my mistress; let us imagine the loss of a parent, sister or brother, the tenderness of all were united in her. I was a poor little outcast and a stranger when she took me in; not only into her house, but I presently became a sharer in her most tender affections. I was treated by her more like her child than her servant; no opportunity was left unimproved of giving me the best of advice; but in terms how tender! how engaging! This I hope ever to keep in remembrance. Her exemplary life was a greater monitor than all her precepts and instructions; thus we may observe of how much greater force example is than instruction. To alleviate our sorrows we had the satisfaction to see her depart in inexpressible raptures, earnest longings, and impatient thirstings for the *upper* courts of the Lord. Do, my dear friend, remember me and this family in your closet, that this afflicting dispensation may be sanctified to us. I am very sorry to hear that you are indisposed, but hope this will find you in better health. I have been unwell the greater part of the winter, but am much better as the spring approaches. Pray excuse my

not writing you so long before, for I have been so busy lately that I could not find leisure. I shall send the 5 books you wrote for, the first convenient opportunity; if you want more they shall be ready for you. I am very affectionately your friend,

PHILLIS WHEATLEY.

After the death of Mrs. Wheatley Phillis seems not to have lived regularly at the old home; at least one of her letters written in 1775 was sent from Providence. For Mr. Wheatley the house must have been a sad one; his daughter was married and living in her own home, his son was living abroad, and his wife was dead. It was in this darkening period of her life, however, that a very pleasant experience came to Phillis Wheatley. This was her reception at the hands of George Washington. In 1775, while the siege of Boston was in progress, she wrote a letter to the distinguished soldier, enclosing a complimentary poem. Washington later replied as follows:

CAMBRIDGE, *Feb. 2, 1776.*

MISS PHILLIS,—Your favor of the 26th of October did not reach my hand till the middle of December. Time enough, you say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences continually interposing to distract the mind and to withdraw

the attention, I hope, will apologize for the delay and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real neglect. I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me, in the elegant lines you enclosed, and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyric, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your poetical talents, in honor of which, and as a tribute justly due to you, I would have published the poem, had I not been apprehensive that while I only meant to give the world this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of vanity. This and nothing else determined me not to give it place in the public prints. If you should ever come to Cambridge or near headquarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favored by the muses, and to whom Nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations.

I am, with great respect,
Your obedient humble servant,
GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Not long afterwards Phillis accepted the invitation of the General and was received in Cambridge with marked courtesy by Washington and his officers.

The Wheatley home was finally broken up by the death of Mr. John Wheatley, March 12, 1778, at the age of seventy-two. After this event Phillis lived for a short time with a friend of Mrs. Wheatley, and then took an apartment and lived by herself. By April she

had yielded to the blandishments of John Peters sufficiently to be persuaded to become his wife. This man is variously reported to have been a baker, a barber, a grocer, a doctor, and a lawyer. With all of these professions and occupations, however, he seems not to have possessed the ability to make a living. He wore a wig, sported a cane, and generally felt himself superior to labor. Bereft of old friends as she was, however, sick and lonely, it is not surprising that when love and care seemed thus to present themselves the heart of the woman yielded. It was not long before she realized that she was married to a ne'er-do-well at a time when even an industrious man found it hard to make a living. The course of the Revolutionary War made it more and more difficult for people to secure the bare necessaries of life, and the horrors of Valley Forge were but an aggravation of the general distress. The year was further made memorable by the death of Mary Wheatley, Mrs. Lathrop, on the 24th of September.

When Boston fell into the hands of the British, the inhabitants fled in all directions. Mrs. Peters accompanied her husband to Wil-

mington, Mass., where she suffered much from poverty. After the evacuation of Boston by the British troops, she returned thither. A niece of Mrs. Wheatley, whose son had been slain in battle, received her under her own roof. This woman was a widow, was not wealthy, and kept a little school in order to support herself. Mrs. Peters and the two children whose mother she had become remained with her for six weeks. Then Peters came for his wife, having provided an apartment for her. Just before her departure for Wilmington, Mrs. Peters entrusted her papers to a daughter of the lady who received her on her return from that place. After her death these were demanded by Peters as the property of his wife. They were of course promptly given to him. Some years afterwards he returned to the South, and nothing is known of what became of the manuscripts.

The conduct of her husband estranged Mrs. Peters from her old acquaintances, and her pride kept her from informing them of her distress. After the war, however, one of Mrs. Wheatley's relatives hunted her out and found that her two children were dead, and that a

third that had been born was sick. This seems to have been in the winter of 1783–84. Nathaniel Wheatley, who had been living in London, died in the summer of 1783. In 1784 John Peters suffered imprisonment in jail. After his liberation he worked as a journeyman baker, later attempted to practice law, and finally pretended to be a physician. His wife, meanwhile, earned her board by drudgery in a cheap lodging-house on the west side of the town. Her disease made rapid progress, and she died December 5, 1784. Her last baby died and was buried with her. No one of her old acquaintances seems to have known of her death. On the Thursday after this event, however, the following notice appeared in the *Independent Chronicle:*

> Last Lord's Day, died Mrs. Phillis Peters (formerly Phillis Wheatley), aged thirty-one, known to the world by her celebrated miscellaneous poems. Her funeral is to be this afternoon, at four o'clock, from the house lately improved by Mr. Todd, nearly opposite Dr. Bulfinch's at West Boston, where her friends and acquaintances are desired to attend.

The house referred to was situated on or near the present site of the Revere House in

Bowdoin Square. The exact site of the grave of Phillis Wheatley is not known.

At the time when she was most talked about, Phillis Wheatley was regarded as a prodigy, appearing as she did at a time when the achievement of the Negro in literature and art was still negligible. Her vogue, however, was more than temporary, and the 1793, 1802, and 1816 editions of her poems found ready sale. In the early years of the last century her verses were frequently to be found in school readers. From the first, however, there were those who discounted her poetry. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, said that it was beneath the dignity of criticism. If after 1816 interest in her work declined, it was greatly revived at the time of the anti-slavery agitation, when anything indicating unusual capacity on the part of the Negro was received with eagerness. When Margaretta Matilda Odell of Jamaica Plain, a descendant of the Wheatley family, republished the poems with a memoir in 1834, there was such a demand for the book that two more editions were called for within the next three years. For a variety of reasons, especially an increasing race-consciousness on the part of

the Negro, interest in her work has greatly increased within the last decade, and as copies of early editions had within recent years become so rare as to be practically inaccessible, the reprint in 1909 of the volume of 1773 by the A. M. E. Book Concern in Philadelphia was especially welcome.

Only two poems written by Phillis Wheatley after her marriage are in existence. These are "Liberty and Peace," and "An Elegy Sacred to the Memory of Dr. Samuel Cooper." Both were published in 1784. Of "Poems on Various Subjects," the following advertisement appeared in the *Boston Gazette* for January 24, 1774:

This Day Published
Adorn'd with an Elegant Engraving of the Author.
(Price 3s. 4d. L. M. Bound.)
POEMS
on various subjects,—Religious and Moral,
By Phillis Wheatley, a Negro Girl.
Sold by Mess's Cox & Berry,
at their Store, in King-Street, Boston.
N. B.—The subscribers are requested to apply for their copies.

The little octavo volume of 124 pages contains 39 poems. One of these, however, must

be excluded from the enumeration, as it is simply "A Rebus by I. B.," which serves as the occasion of Phillis Wheatley's poem, the answer to it. Fourteen of the poems are elegiac, and at least six others are occasional. Two are paraphrases from the Bible. We are thus left with sixteen poems to represent the best that Phillis Wheatley had produced by the time she was twenty years old. One of the longest of these is "Niobe in Distress for Her Children Slain by Apollo, from Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book VI, and from a View of the Painting of Mr. Richard Wilson." This poem contains two interesting examples of personification (neither of which seems to be drawn from Ovid), "fate portentous whistling in the air," and "the feather'd vengeance quiv'ring in his hands," though the point might easily be made that these are little more than a part of the pseudo-classic tradition. The poem, "To S. M., a Young African Painter, on seeing his works," was addressed to Scipio Moorhead, a young man who exhibited some talent for drawing and who was a servant of the Rev. John Moorhead of Boston. From the poem we should infer that one of his sub-

jects was the story of Damon and Pythias. Of prime importance are the two or three poems of autobiographical interest. We have already remarked "On Being Brought from Africa to America." In the lines addressed to William, Earl of Dartmouth, the young woman spoke again from her personal experience. Important also in this connection is the poem "On Virtue," with its plea:

> Attend me, Virtue, thro' my youthful years!
> O leave me not to the false joys of time!
> But guide my steps to endless life and bliss.

One would suppose that Phillis Wheatley would make of "An Hymn to Humanity" a fairly strong piece of work. It is typical of the restraint under which she labored that this is one of the most conventional things in the volume. All critics agree, however, that the strongest lines in the book are those entitled "On Imagination." This effort is more sustained than the others, and it is the leading poem that Edmund Clarence Stedman chose to represent Phillis Wheatley in his "Library of American Literature." The following lines are representative of its quality:

Imagination! Who can sing thy force?
Or who describe the swiftness of thy course?
Soaring through air to find the bright abode,
Th' empyreal palace of the thundering God,
We on thy pinions can surpass the wind,
And leave the rolling universe behind:
From star to star the mental optics rove,
Measure the skies, and range the realms above;
There in one view we grasp the mighty whole,
Or with new worlds amaze th' unbounded soul.

Hardly beyond this is "Liberty and Peace," the best example of the later verse. The poem is too long for inclusion here, but may be found in Duyckinck's "Cyclopedia of American Literature," and Heartman and Schomburg's collected edition of the Poems and Letters.

It is unfortunate that, imitating Pope, Phillis Wheatley more than once fell into his pitfalls. Her diction—"fleecy care," "vital breath," "feather'd race"—is distinctly pseudo-classic. The construction is not always clear; for instance, in the poem, "To Mæcenas," there are three distinct references to Virgil, when grammatically the poetess seems to be speaking of three different men. Then, of course, any young writer working under the influence of Pope and his school would feel a

sense of repression. If Phillis Wheatley had come on the scene forty years later, when the romantic writers had given a new tone to English poetry, she would undoubtedly have been much greater. Even as it was, however, she made her mark, and her place in the history of American literature, though not a large one, is secure.

Hers was a great soul. Her ambition knew no bounds, her thirst for knowledge was insatiable, and she triumphed over the most adverse circumstances. A child of the wilderness and a slave, by her grace and culture she satisfied the conventionalities of Boston and of England. Her brilliant conversation was equaled only by her modest demeanor. Everything about her was refined. More and more as one studies her life he becomes aware of her sterling Christian character. In a dark day she caught a glimpse of the eternal light, and it was meet that the first Negro woman in American literature should be one of unerring piety and the highest of literary ideals.

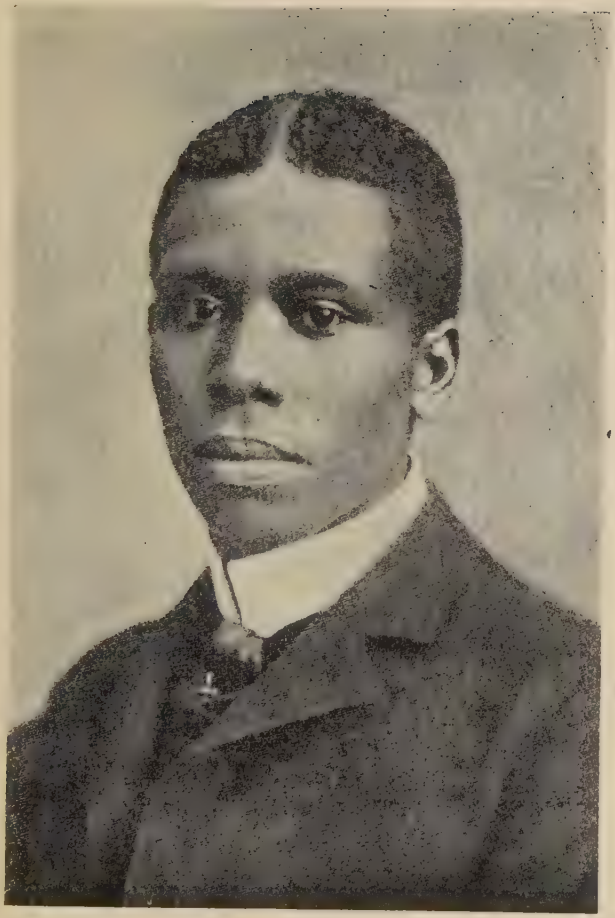
III

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

INCOMPARABLY the foremost exponent in verse of the life and character of the Negro people has been Paul Laurence Dunbar. This gifted young poet represented perfectly the lyric and romantic quality of the race, with its moodiness, its abandon, its love of song, and its pathetic irony, and his career has been the inspiration of thousands of the young men and women whose problems he had to face, and whose aspirations he did so much to realize.

Dunbar was born in Dayton, Ohio, June 27, 1872. His parents were uneducated but earnest hard-working people, and throughout his life the love of the poet for his mother was ever a dominating factor. From very early years Dunbar made little attempts at rhyming; but what he afterwards called his first poetical

achievement was his recitation of some original verses at a Sunday School Easter celebration when he was thirteen years old. He attended the Steele High School in Dayton, where he was the only Negro student in his class; and by reason of his modest and yet magnetic personality, he became very popular with his schoolmates. In his second year he became a member of the literary society of the school, afterwards became president of the same, as well as editor of *The High School Times*, a monthly student publication, and on his completion of the course in 1891 he composed the song for his class. Somewhat irregularly for the next two or three years Dunbar continued his studies, but he never had the advantage of a regular college education. On leaving the high school, after vainly seeking for something better, he accepted a position as elevator boy, working for four dollars a week. In 1893, at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, he was given a position by Frederick Douglass, who was in charge of the exhibit from Hayti. "Oak and Ivy" appeared in 1893, and "Majors and Minors" in 1895. These little books were privately printed; Dunbar had to assume



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full responsibility for selling them, and not unnaturally he had many bitter hours of discouragement. Asking people to buy his verses grated on his sensitive nature, and he once declared to a friend that he would never sell another book. Sometimes, however, he succeeded beyond his highest hopes, and gradually, with the assistance of friends, chief among whom was Dr. H. A. Tobey, of Toledo, the young poet came into notice as a reader of his verses. William Dean Howells wrote a full-page review of his poems in the issue of *Harper's Weekly* that contained an account of William McKinley's first nomination for the presidency. Dunbar was now fairly launched upon his larger fame, and "Lyrics of Lowly Life," published by Dodd, Mead & Co. in 1896, introduced him to the wider reading public. This book is deservedly the poet's best known. It contained the richest work of his youth and was really never surpassed. In 1897 Dunbar enhanced his reputation as a reader of his own poems by a visit to England. About this time he was very busy, writing numerous poems and magazine articles, and meeting with a success that was so much greater than

that of most of the poets of the day that it became a vogue. In October, 1897, through the influence of Robert G. Ingersoll, he secured employment as an assistant in the reading room of the Library of Congress, Washington; but he gave up this position after a year, for the confinement and his late work at night on his own account were making rapid inroads upon his health. On March 6, 1898, Dunbar was married to Alice Ruth Moore, of New Orleans, who also had become prominent as a writer. Early in 1899 he went South, visiting Tuskegee and other schools, and giving many readings. Later in the same year he went to Colorado in a vain search for health. Books were now appearing in rapid succession, short story collections and novels as well as poems. "The Uncalled," written in London, reflected the poet's thought of entering the ministry. It was followed by "The Love of Landry," a Colorado story; "The Fanatics," and "The Sport of the Gods." Collections of short stories were, "Folks from Dixie," "The Strength of Gideon," "In Old Plantation Days," and "The Heart of Happy Hollow." Volumes of verse were "Lyrics of the Hearthside,"

"Lyrics of Love and Laughter," "Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow," as well as several specially illustrated volumes. Dunbar bought a home in Dayton, where he lived with his mother. His last years were a record of sincere friendships and a losing fight against disease. He died February 9, 1906. He was only thirty-three, but he "had existed millions of years."

Unless his novels are considered as forming a distinct class, Dunbar's work falls naturally into three divisions: the poems in classic English, those in dialect, and the stories in prose. It was his work in the Negro dialect that was his distinct contribution to American literature. That this was not his desire may be seen from the eight lines entitled, "The Poet," in which he longed for success in the singing of his "deeper notes" and spoke of his dialect as "a jingle in a broken tongue." Any criticism of Dunbar's classic English verse will have to reckon with the following poems: "Ere Sleep Comes Down to Soothe the Weary Eyes," "The Poet and His Song," "Life," "Promise and Fulfillment," "Ships That Pass in the Night," and "October." In the pure

flow of lyrical verse the poet rarely surpassed his early lines:*

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes,
How questioneth the soul that other soul—
The inner sense which neither cheats nor lies,
But self exposes unto self, a scroll
Full writ with all life's acts unwise or wise,
In characters indelible and known;
So, trembling with the shock of sad surprise,
The soul doth view its awful self alone,
Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes.

"The Poet and his Song" is also distinguished for its simplicity and its lyric quality:

A song is but a little thing,
And yet what joy it is to sing!
In hours of toil it gives me zest,
And when at eve I long for rest;
When cows come home along the bars,
And in the fold I hear the bell,
As night, the Shepherd, herds his stars,
I sing my song, and all is well.

. . . . . .

Sometimes the sun, unkindly hot,
My garden makes a desert spot;

* As stated in the Preface, we are under obligations to Dodd, Mead & Co. for permission to use the quotations from Dunbar. These are covered by copyright by this firm, as follows: "Ere Sleep Comes Down to Soothe the Weary Eyes," "The Poet and his Song," and "Life," 1896; Lullaby," 1899; and "Compensation," 1905.

Sometimes a blight upon the tree
Takes all the fruit away from me;
And then with throes of bitter pain
Rebellious passions rise and swell;
But life is more than fruit or grain,
And so I sing, and all is well.

The two stanzas entitled "Life" have probably been quoted more than any other lines written by the poet:

A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to weep in,
A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the moans come double;
And that is life.

A crust and a corner that love makes precious,
With a smile to warm and the tears to refresh us;
And joy seems sweeter when cares come after,
And a moan is the finest of foils for laughter;
And that is life.

"Promise and Fulfillment" was especially admired by Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske, who frequently recited it with never-failing applause. Of the poet's own reading of "Ships that Pass in the Night" on one occasion, Brand Whitlock wrote: "That last evening he recited—oh! what a voice he had—his 'Ships that Pass in the Night.' I can hear

him now and see the expression on his fine face as he said, 'Passing! Passing!' It was prophetic."

Other pieces, no more distinguished in poetic quality, are of special biographical interest. "Robert Gould Shaw" was the expression of pessimism as to the Negro's future in America. "To Louise" was addressed to the young daughter of Dr. Tobey, who, on one occasion, when the poet was greatly depressed, in the simple way of a child cheered him by her gift of a rose. "The Monk's Walk" reflects the poet's thought of being a preacher. Finally, there is the swan song, "Compensation," contributed to *Lippincott's*, eight exquisite lines:

> Because I had loved so deeply,
> Because I had loved so long,
> God in his great compassion
> Gave me the gift of song.
>
> Because I have loved so vainly,
> And sung with such faltering breath,
> The Master in infinite mercy
> Offers the boon of Death.

The dialect poems suffer by quotation, being artistic primarily as wholes. Of these, by com-

mon consent, the masterpiece is, "When Malindy Sings," a poem inspired by the singing of the poet's mother. Other pieces in dialect that have proved unusually successful, especially as readings, are "The Rivals," "A Coquette Conquered," "The Ol' Tunes," "A Corn-Song," "When de Co'n Pone's Hot," "How Lucy Backslid," "The Party," "At Candle-Lightin' Time," "Angelina," "Whistling Sam," "Two Little Boots," and "The Old Front Gate." Almost all of these poems represent the true humorist's blending of humor and pathos, and all of them exemplify the delicate and sympathetic irony of which Dunbar was such a master. As representative of the dialect verse at its best, attention might be called to a little poem that was included in the illustrated volume, "Candle-Lightin' Time," but that, strangely enough, was omitted from both of the larger editions of the poems, very probably because the title, "Lullaby," was used more than once by the poet:

Kiver up yo' haid, my little lady,
  Hyeah de win' a-blowin' out o' do's,
Don' you kick, ner projick wid de comfo't,
  Less'n fros 'll bite yo' little toes.

Shut yo' eyes, an' snuggle up to mammy;
Gi' me bofe yo' han's, I hol' 'em tight;
Don' you be afeard, an' 'mence to trimble
Des ez soon ez I blows out de light.

Angels is a-mindin' you, my baby,
Keepin' off de Bad Man in de night.
Whut de use o' bein' skeered o' nuffin'?
You don' fink de da'kness gwine to bite?
Whut de crackin' soun' you hyeah erroun' you?—
Lawsy, chile, you tickles me to def!—
Dat's de man what brings de fros', a-paintin'
Picters on de winder wid his bref.

Mammy ain' afeard, you hyeah huh laughin'?
Go 'way, Mistah Fros', you can't come in;
Baby ain' erceivin' folks dis evenin',
Reckon dat you 'll have to call ag'in.
Curl yo' little toes up so, my 'possum—
Umph, but you's a cunnin' one fu' true!—
Go to sleep, de angels is a-watchin',
An' yo' mammy's mindin' of you, too.

The short stories of Dunbar would have been sufficient to make his reputation, even if he had not written his poems. One of the best technically is "Jimsella," from the "Folks from Dixie" volume. This story exhibits the pathos of the life of unskilled Negroes in the North, and the leading of a little child. In the sureness with which it moves to its con-

clusion it is a beautiful work of art. "A Family Feud" shows the influence of an old servant in a wealthy Kentucky family. In similar vein is "Aunt Tempe's Triumph." "The Walls of Jericho" is an exposure of the methods of a sensational preacher. Generally these stories attempt no keen satire, but only a faithful portrayal of conditions as they are, or, in most cases, as they were in ante-bellum days. Dunbar's novels are generally weaker than his short stories, though "The Sport of the Gods," because of its study of a definite phase of life, rises above the others. Nor are his occasional articles especially strong. He was eminently a lyric poet. By his graceful and beautiful verse it is that he has won a distinct place in the history of American literature.

By his genius Paul Laurence Dunbar attracted the attention of the great, the wise, and the good. His bookcase contained many autograph copies of the works of distinguished contemporaries. The similarity of his position in American literature to that of Burns in English has frequently been pointed out. In our own time he most readily invites comparison

with James Whitcomb Riley. The writings of both men are distinguished by infinite tenderness and pathos. But above all worldly fame, above even the expression of a struggling people's heart, was the poet's own striving for the unattainable. There was something heroic about him withal, something that links him with Keats, or, in this latter day, with Rupert Brooke and Alan Seeger. He yearned for love, and the world rushed on; then he smiled at death and was universally loved.

IV

CHARLES W. CHESNUTT

CHARLES WADDELL CHESNUTT, the best known novelist and short story writer of the race, was born in Cleveland, Ohio, June 20, 1858. At the age of sixteen he began to teach in the public schools of North Carolina, from which state his parents had gone to Cleveland; and at the age of twenty-three he became principal of the State Normal School at Fayetteville. In 1883 he left the South, engaging for a short while in newspaper work in New York City, but going soon to Cleveland, where he worked as a stenographer. He was admitted to the bar in 1887.

While in North Carolina Mr. Chesnutt studied to good purpose the dialect, manners, and superstitions of the Negro people of the state. In 1887 he began in the *Atlantic Monthly* the series of stories which was afterwards brought together in the volume entitled, "The

Conjure Woman." This book was published by the Houghton Mifflin Co., the firm which published also Mr. Chesnutt's other collection of stories and the first two of his three novels. "The Wife of his Youth, and Other Stories of the Color-Line" appeared in 1899. In the same year appeared a compact biography of Frederick Douglass, a contribution to the Beacon Biographies of Eminent Americans. Three novels have since appeared, as follows: "The House Behind the Cedars" (1900); "The Marrow of Tradition" (1901); and "The Colonel's Dream"(1905).

Mr. Chesnutt's short stories are not all of the same degree of excellence, but the best ones show that he is fully master of the short story as a literary form. One of the best technically is "The Bouquet." This is a story of the devotion of a little Negro girl to her white teacher, and shows clearly how the force of Southern prejudice might forbid the expression of simple love not only in a representative home, but even when the object of the devotion is borne to the cemetery. "The Sheriff's Children" is a tragic tale of the relations of a white father with his illegitimate colored son.

CHARLES W. CHESNUTT

Most famous of all these stories, however, is "The Wife of his Youth," a simple work of art of great intensity. It is a tale of a very fair colored man who, just before the Civil War, by the aid of his Negro wife, makes his way from slavery in Missouri to freedom in a Northern city, Groveland [Cleveland?]. After the years have brought to him business success and culture, and he has become the acknowledged leader of his social circle and the prospective husband of a very attractive young widow, his wife suddenly appears on the scene. The story ends with Mr. Ryder's acknowledging before a company of guests the wife of his youth. Such stories as these, each setting forth a certain problem and working it out to its logical conclusion, reflect great credit upon the literary skill of the writer.

Of the novels, "The House Behind the Cedars" is commonly given first place. In the story of the heroine, Rena Walden, are treated some of the most subtle and searching questions raised by the color-line. Rena is sought in love by three men, George Tryon, a white man, whose love fails when put to the test; Jeff Wain, a coarse and brutal mu-

latto, and Frank Fowler, a devoted young Negro, who makes every sacrifice demanded by love. The novel, especially in its last pages, moves with an intensity that is an unmistakable sign of power. It is Mr. Chesnutt's most sustained treatment of the subject for which he has become best known, that is, the delicate and tragic situation of those who live on the border-line of the races; and it is the best work of fiction yet written by a member of the race in America. In "The Marrow of Tradition" the main theme is the relations of two women, one white and one colored, whose father, the same white man, had in time been married to the mother of each. The novel touches upon almost every phase of the Negro Problem. It is a powerful plea, but perhaps too much a novel of purpose to satisfy the highest standards of art. The Wellington of the story is very evidently Wilmington, N. C., and the book was written immediately after the race troubles in that city in 1898. "The Colonel's Dream" is a sad story of the failure of high ideals. Colonel Henry French is a man who, born in the South, achieves success in New York and returns to

his old home for a little vacation, only to find himself face to face with all the problems that one meets in a backward Southern town. "He dreamed of a regenerated South, filled with thriving industries, and thronged with a prosperous and happy people, where every man, having enough for his needs, was willing that every other man should have the same; where law and order should prevail unquestioned, and where every man could enter, through the golden door of hope, the field of opportunity, where lay the prizes of life, which all might have an equal chance to win or lose." Becoming interested in the injustice visited upon the Negroes in the courts, and in the employment of white children in the cotton-mills, Colonel French encounters opposition to his benevolent plans, opposition which finally sends him back to New York defeated. Mr. Chesnutt writes in simple, clear English, and his methods might well be studied by younger writers who desire to treat, in the guise of fiction, the many searching questions that one meets to-day in the life of the South.

V

W. E. BURGHARDT DUBOIS

WILLIAM EDWARD BURGHARDT DUBOIS was born February 23, 1868, at Great Barrington, Mass. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Fisk University in 1888, the same degree at Harvard in 1890, that of Master of Arts at Harvard in 1891, and, after a season of study at the University of Berlin, received also the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard in 1895, his thesis being his exhaustive study, "Suppression of the Slave-Trade." Dr. DuBois taught for a brief period at Wilberforce University, and was also for a time an assistant and fellow in Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, producing in 1899 his study, "The Philadelphia Negro." In 1896 he accepted the professorship of History and Economics at Atlanta University, the position which he left in 1910 to become Director of Publicity and Research for the National Association for the Advance-

arts of rhetoric, especially by liquid and alliterative effects, strong antithesis, frequent allusion, and poetic suggestiveness. The color-line is "The Veil," the familiar melodies, the "Sorrow Songs." The qualities that have just been remarked will be observed in the following paragraphs:

I have seen a land right merry with the sun, where children sing, and rolling hills lie like passioned women wanton with harvest. And there in the King's Highway sat and sits a figure veiled and bowed, by which the traveler's footsteps hasten as they go. On the tainted air broods fear. Three centuries' thought has been the raising and unveiling of that bowed human heart, and now behold a century new for the duty and the deed. The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.

. . . . . .

My journey was done, and behind me lay hill and dale, and Life and Death. How shall man measure Progress there where the dark-faced Josie lies? How many heartfuls of sorrow shall balance a bushel of wheat? How hard a thing is life to the lowly, and yet how human and real! And all this life and love and strife and failure—is it the twilight of nightfall or the flush of some faint-dawning day?

Thus sadly musing, I rode to Nashville in the Jim Crow car.

. . . . . .

I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color-line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas,

where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they all come graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil. Is this the life you grudge us, O knightly America? Is this the life you long to change into the dull red hideousness of Georgia? Are you so afraid lest peering from this high Pisgah, between Philistine and Amalekite, we sight the Promised Land?

Where merit is so even and the standard of performance so high, one hesitates to choose that which is best. "The Dawn of Freedom" is a study of the Freedmen's Bureau; "Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" is a frank criticism of the late orator and leader; "The Meaning of Progress" is a story of life in Tennessee, told with infinite pathos by one who has been the country schoolmaster; "The Training of Black Men" is a plea for liberally educated leadership; while "The Quest of the Golden Fleece," like one or two related essays, is a faithful portrayal of life in the black belt. The book, as a whole, is a powerful plea for justice and the liberty of citizenship.

W. E. Burghardt DuBois is the best example that has so far appeared of the combination

of high scholarship and the peculiarly romantic temperament of the Negro race. Beneath all the play of logic and statistic beats the passion of a mighty human heart. For a long time he was criticised as aloof, reserved, unsympathetic; but more and more, as the years have passed, has his mission become clearer, his love for his people stronger. Forced by the pressure of circumstance, gradually has he been led from the congenial retreat of the scholar into the arena of social struggle; but for two decades he has remained an outstanding interpreter of the spiritual life of his people. He is to-day the foremost leader of the race in America.

VI

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

THE foremost of the poets of the race at present is William Stanley Braithwaite, of Boston. Mr. Braithwaite is not only the possessor of unusual talent, but for years he has worked most conscientiously at his art and taken the time and the pains to master the fundamentals that others all too often deem unimportant. In 1904 he published a small book of poems entitled "Lyrics of Life and Love." This was followed four years later by "The House of Falling Leaves." Within recent years he has given less and less time to his own verse, becoming more and more distinguished as a critic in the special field of American poetry. For several years he has been a regular and valued contributor of literary criticism to the *Boston Evening Transcript;* he has had verse or critical essays in the *Forum,* the *Century, Scribner's,* the *Atlantic,*

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etc.; and in 1916 became editor of the new *Poetry Review* of Cambridge. He has collected and edited (publishing chiefly through Brentano's) "The Book of Elizabethan Verse," "The Book of Georgian Verse," and "The Book of Restoration Verse"; and he has also published the "Anthology of Magazine Verse" for each year since 1913. He is the general editor of "The Contemporary American Poets Series," which is projected by the Poetry Review Company, and which will be issued in twelve little books, each giving a sympathetic study of a poet of the day; he himself is writing the volume on Edwin Arlington Robinson; and before long it is expected that a novel will appear from his pen. Very recently (1917) Mr. Braithwaite has brought together in a volume, "The Poetic Year," the series of articles which he contributed to the *Transcript* in 1916–17. The aim was in the form of conversations between a small group of friends to discuss the poetry of 1916. Says he: "There were four of us in the little group, and our common love for the art of poetry suggested a weekly meeting in the grove to discuss the books we had all agreed upon reading. . . .

I made up my mind to record these discussions, and the setting as well, with all those other touches of human character and mood which never fail to enliven and give color to the serious business of art and life. . . . I gave fanciful names to my companions, Greek names which I am persuaded symbolized the spirit of each. There was nothing Psyche touched but made its soul apparent. Her wood-lore was beautiful and thorough; the very spirit of flowers, birds and trees was evoked when she went among them. Our other companion of her sex was Cassandra, and we gave her this name not because her forebodings were gloomy, but merely for her prophesying disposition, which was always building air-castles. The other member besides myself of our little group was Jason, of the heroic dreams and adventuresome spirit. He was restless in the bonds of a tranquillity that chafed the hidden spirit of his being." From the introduction we get something of the critic's own aims and ideals: "The conversational scheme of the book may, or may not, interest some readers. Poetry is a human thing, and it is time for the world—and especially our part of the world—to re-

gard it as belonging to the people. It sprang from the folk, and passed, when culture began to flourish, into the possession of a class. Now culture is passing from a class to the folk, and with it poetry is returning to its original possessors. It is in the spirit of these words that we discuss the poetry of the year." Emphasis is here given to this work because it is the sturdiest achievement of Mr. Braithwaite in the field in which he has recently become most distinguished, and even the brief quotations cited are sufficient to give some idea of his graceful, suggestive prose.

In a review of this writer's poetry we have to consider especially the two collections, "Lyrics of Life and Love," and "The House of Falling Leaves," and the poems that have more recently appeared in the *Atlantic*, *Scribner's*, and other magazines. It is to be hoped that before very long he will publish a new edition of his poems. The earlier volumes are out of print, and a new book could contain the best of them, as well as what has appeared more recently. "Lyrics of Life and Love" embodied the best of the poet's early work. The little book contains eighty pages, and no one of the

lyrics takes up more than two pages, twenty in fact being exactly eight lines in length. This appearance of fragility, however, is a little deceptive. While Keats and Shelley are constantly evident as the models in technique, the yearning of more than one lyric reflects the deeper romantic temper. The bravado and the tenderness of the old poets are evident again in the two Christmas pieces, "Holly Berry and Mistletoe," and "Yule-Song: A Memory":

> The trees are bare, wild flies the snow,
> Hearths are glowing, hearts are merry—
> High in the air is the Mistletoe,
> Over the door is the Holly Berry.
>
> Never have care how the winds may blow,
> Never confess the revel grows weary—
> Yule is the time of the Mistletoe,
> Yule is the time of the Holly Berry.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> December comes, snows come,
> Comes the wintry weather;
> Faces from away come—
> Hearts must be together.
> Down the stair-steps of the hours
> Yule leaps the hills and towers—
> Fill the bowl and hang the holly,
> Let the times be jolly.

"The Watchers" is in the spirit of Kingsley's "The Three Fishers":

Two women on the lone wet strand—
(*The wind's out with a will to roam*)
The waves wage war on rocks and sand,
(*And a ship is long due home.*)

The sea sprays in the women's eyes—
(*Hearts can writhe like the sea's wild foam*)
Lower descend the tempestuous skies,
(*For the wind's out with a will to roam.*)

"O daughter, thine eyes be better than mine,"
(*The waves ascend high on yonder dome*)
"North or South is there never a sign?"
(*And a ship is long due home.*)

They watched there all the long night through—
(*The wind's out with a will to roam*)
Wind and rain and sorrow for two—
(*And heaven on the long reach home.*)

The second volume marked a decided advance in technique. When we remember also the Pre-Raphaelite spirit, with its love of rhythm and imagery, we are not surprised to find here an appreciation "To Dante Gabriel Rossetti." Especially has the poet made progress in the handling of the sonnet, as may be seen in the following:

My thoughts go marching like an armèd host
Out of the city of silence, guns and cars;
Troop after troop across my dreams they post
To the invasion of the wind and stars.
O brave array of youth's untamed desire!
With thy bold, dauntless captain Hope to lead
His raw recruits to Fate's opposing fire,
And up the walls of Circumstance to bleed.
How fares the expedition in the end?
When this my heart shall have old age for king
And to the wars no further troop can send,
What final message will the arm'stice bring?
The host gone forth in youth the world to meet,
In age returns—in victory or defeat?

Then there is the epilogue with its heart-cry:

Lord of the mystic star-blown gleams
Whose sweet compassion lifts my dreams;
Lord of life in the lips of the rose
That kiss desire; whence Beauty grows;
Lord of the power inviolate
That keeps immune thy seas from fate,

. . . . . .

Lord, Very God of these works of thine,
Hear me, I beseech thee, most divine!

Within very recent years Mr. Braithwaite has attracted unusual attention among the discerning by a new note of mysticism that has crept into his verse. This was first ob-

served in "Sandy Star," that appeared in the *Atlantic* (July, 1909):

No more from out the sunset,
  No more across the foam,
No more across the windy hills
  Will Sandy Star come home.

He went away to search it,
  With a curse upon his tongue,
And in his hands the staff of life
  Made music as it swung.

I wonder if he found it,
  And knows the mystery now:
Our Sandy Star who went away
  With the secret on his brow.

The same note is in "The Mystery" (or "The Way," as the poet prefers to call it) that appeared in *Scribner's* (October, 1915):

He could not tell the way he came
  Because his chart was lost:
Yet all his way was paved with flame
  From the bourne he crossed.

He did not know the way to go,
  Because he had no map:
He followed where the winds blow,—
  And the April sap.

He never knew upon his brow
The secret that he bore—
And laughs away the mystery now
The dark's at his door.

Mr. Braithwaite has done well. He is to-day the foremost man of the race in pure literature. But above any partial or limited consideration, after years of hard work he now has recognition not only as a poet of standing, but as the chief sponsor for current American poetry. No comment on his work could be better than that of the *Transcript,* November 30, 1915: "He has helped poetry to readers as well as to poets. One is guilty of no extravagance in saying that the poets we have —and they may take their place with their peers in any country—and the gathering deference we pay them, are created largely out of the stubborn, self-effacing enthusiasm of this one man. In a sense their distinction is his own. In a sense he has himself written their poetry. Very much by his toil they may write and be read. Not one of them will ever write a finer poem than Braithwaite himself has lived already."

VII

OTHER WRITERS

IN addition to those who have been mentioned, there have been scores of writers who would have to be considered if we were dealing with the literature of the Negro in the widest sense of the term. Not too clearly, however, can the limitations of our subject be insisted upon. We are here concerned with distinctly literary or artistic achievement, and not with work that belongs in the realm of religion, sociology, or politics. Only briefer mention accordingly can be given to these latter fields.

Naturally, from the first there have been works dealing with the place of the Negro in American life. Outstanding after the numerous sociological studies and other contributions to periodical literature of Dr. DuBois are the books of the late Booker T. Washington. Representative of these are "The Future of

the American Negro," "My Larger Education," and "The Man Farthest Down." As early as 1829, however, David Walker, of Boston, published his passionate "Appeal," a protest against slavery that awakened Southern legislatures to action; and in the years just before the Civil War, Henry Highland Garnet wrote sermons and addresses on the status of the race in America, while William Wells Brown wrote "Three Years in Europe," and various other works, some of which will receive later mention. After the war, Alexander Crummell became an outstanding figure by reason of his sermons and addresses, many of which were preserved. He was followed by an interesting group of scholarly men, represented especially by William S. Scarborough, Kelly Miller, and Archibald H. Grimké. Mr. Scarborough is now president of Wilberforce University. He has contributed numerous articles to representative magazines. His work in more technical fields is represented by his "First Lessons in Greek," a treatise on the "Birds" of Aristophanes, and his paper in the *Arena* (January, 1897) on "Negro Folk-Lore and Dialect." Mr. Miller is Dean of the College of Arts and

Sciences at Howard University. He has collected his numerous and cogent papers in two volumes, "Race Adjustment," and "Out of the House of Bondage." The first is the more varied and interesting of the two books, but the latter contains the poetic rhapsody, "I See and Am Satisfied," first published in the *Independent* (August 7, 1913). Mr. A. H. Grimké, as well as Mr. Miller, has contributed to the *Atlantic;* and he has written the lives of Garrison and Sumner in the American Reformers Series. "Negro Culture in West Africa," by George W. Ellis, is original and scholarly; "The Aftermath of Slavery," by William A. Sinclair, is a volume of more than ordinary interest; and "The African Abroad," by William H. Ferris, while confused in construction and form, contains much thoughtful material. Within recent years there have been published a great many works, frequently illustrated, on the progress and achievements of the race. Very few of these books are scholarly. Three collaborations, however, are of decided value. One is a little volume entitled, "The Negro Problem," consisting of seven papers by representative

Negroes, and published in 1903 by James Pott & Co., of New York. Another is "From Servitude to Service," published in 1905 by the American Unitarian Association of Boston, and made up of the Old South Lectures on the history and work of Southern institutions for the education of the Negro; while the third collaboration is, "The Negro in the South," published in 1907 by George W. Jacobs & Co., of Philadelphia, and made up of four papers, two by Dr. Washington, and two by Dr. DuBois, which were the William Levi Bull Lectures in the Philadelphia Divinity School for the year 1907.

Halfway between works on the Negro Problem and those in history, are those in the field of biography and autobiography. For decades before the Civil War the experiences of fugitive slaves were used as a part of the anti-slavery argument. In 1845 appeared the "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass," this being greatly enlarged and extended in 1881 as "The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass." In similar vein was the "Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro," by Samuel Ringgold Ward. Then Josiah Henson (the

original of Uncle Tom) and Sojourner Truth issued their narratives. Collections of more than ordinary interest were William Wells Brown's "The Black Man" (1863), James M. Trotter's "Music and Some Highly Musical People" (1878), and William J. Simmons's "Men of Mark" (1887). John Mercer Langston's "From the Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol" is interesting and serviceable; special interest attaches to Matthew Henson's "A Negro Explorer at the North Pole"; while Maud Cuney Hare's "Norris Wright Cuney" was a distinct contribution to the history of Southern politics. The most widely known work in this field, however, is "Up From Slavery," by Booker T. Washington. The unaffected and simple style of this book has made it a model of personal writing, and it is by reason of merit that the work has gained unusual currency.

The study, of course, becomes more special in the field of history. Interest from the first was shown in church history. This was represented immediately after the war by Bishop Daniel A. Payne's studies in the history of the A. M. E. Church, and twenty-five

years later, for the Baptist denomination, by E. M. Brawley's "The Negro Baptist Pulpit." One of the earliest writers of merit was William C. Nell, who, in 1851, published his pamphlet, "Services of Colored Americans in the Wars of 1776 and 1812." "The Rising Son," by William Wells Brown, was an account of "the antecedents and advancement of the colored race"; the work gave considerable attention to Africa, Hayti, and the colonies, and was quite scholarly in method. Then, in 1872, full of personal experience, appeared William Still's "The Underground Railroad." The epoch-making work in history, however, was the two-volume "History of the Negro Race in America," by George W. Williams, which was issued in 1883. This work was the exploration of a new field and the result of seven years of study. The historian more than once wrote subjectively, but his work was, on the whole, written with unusually good taste. After thirty years some of his pages have, of course, been superseded; but his work is even yet the great storehouse for students of Negro history. Technical study within recent years is best represented by the Harvard doctorate theses of Dr. DuBois and

Dr. Carter G. Woodson. That of Dr. DuBois has already been mentioned. That of Dr. Woodson was entitled "The Disruption of Virginia." Dr. Woodson is the editor of the *Journal of Negro History*, a quarterly magazine that began to appear in 1916, and that has already published several articles of the first order of merit. He has also written "The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861," a work in the most scientific spirit of modern historical study, to which a companion volume for the later period is expected. Largely original also in the nature of their contribution have been "The Haitian Revolution," by T. G. Steward, and "The Facts of Reconstruction," by John R. Lynch; and, while less intensive, interesting throughout is J. W. Cromwell's "The Negro in American History."

Many of the younger writers are cultivating the short story. Especially have two or three, as yet unknown to the wider public, done excellent work in connection with syndicates of great newspapers. "The Goodness of St. Rocque, and Other Stories," by Alice Moore Dunbar (now Mrs. Nelson), is representative of the stronger work in this field. Numerous

attempts at the composition of novels have also been made. Even before the Civil War was over appeared William Wells Brown's "Clotille: A Tale of the Southern States." It is in this special department, however, that a sense of literary form has frequently been most lacking. The distinctively literary essay has not unnaturally suffered from the general pressure of the Problem. A paper in the *Atlantic Monthly* (February, 1906), however, "The Joys of Being a Negro," by Edward E. Wilson, a Chicago lawyer, was of outstanding brilliancy. A. O. Stafford, of Washington, is a special student of the folklore of Africa. He has contributed several scholarly papers to the *Journal of Negro History*, and he has also published through the American Book Company an interesting supplementary reader, "Animal Fables From the Dark Continent." Alain Locke is interested in both philosophical and literary studies, represented by "The American Temperament," a paper contributed to the *North American Review* (August, 1911), and a paper on Emile Verhæren in the *Poetry Review* (January, 1917).

Little has been accomplished in sustained

poetic flight. Of shorter lyric verse, however, many booklets have appeared. As this is the field that offers peculiar opportunity for subjective expression, more has been attempted in it than in any other department of artistic endeavor. It demands, therefore, special attention, and the study will take us back before the Civil War.

The first person to attract much attention after Phillis Wheatley was George Moses Horton, of North Carolina, who was born in 1797 and died about 1880 (or 1883). He was ambitious to learn, was the possessor of unusual literary talent, and in one way or another received instruction from various persons. He very soon began to write verse, all of which was infused with his desire for freedom, and much of which was suggested by the common evangelical hymns, as were the following lines:

> Alas! and am I born for this,
> To wear this slavish chain?
> Deprived of all created bliss,
> Through hardship, toil, and pain?
>
> How long have I in bondage lain,
> And languished to be free!

Alas! and must I still complain,
Deprived of liberty?

. . . . . .

Come, Liberty! thou cheerful sound,
Roll through my ravished ears;
Come, let my grief in joys be drowned,
And drive away my fears.

Some of Horton's friends became interested in him and desired to help him publish a volume of his poems, so that from the sale of these he might purchase his freedom and go to the new colony of Liberia. The young man became fired with ambition and inspiration. Thrilled by the new hope, he wrote:

'Twas like the salutation of the dove,
Borne on the zephyr through some lonesome grove,
When spring returns, and winter's chill is past,
And vegetation smiles above the blast.

Horton's master, however, demanded for him an exorbitant price, and when "The Hope of Liberty" appeared in 1829 it had nothing of the sale that was hoped for. Disappointed in his great desire, the poet seems to have lost ambition. He became a janitor around the state university at Chapel Hill, executed small commissions for verse from the students, who

treated him kindly, and in later years went to Philadelphia; but his old dreams had faded. Several reprintings of his poems were made, however, and one of these was bound with the 1838 edition of Phillis Wheatley's poems.

In 1854 appeared the first edition of "Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects," by Frances Ellen Watkins, commonly known as Mrs. Frances E. W. Harper. Mrs. Harper was a woman of exceptionally strong personality and could read her poems to advantage. Her verse was very popular, not less than ten thousand copies of her booklets being sold. It was decidedly lacking in technique, however, and much in the style of Mrs. Hemans. Mrs. Harper was best when most simple, as when in writing of children she said:

> I almost think the angels
> Who tend life's garden fair,
> Drop down the sweet white blossoms
> That bloom around us here.

The secret of her popularity was to be seen in such lines as the following from "Bury Me in a Free Land":

Make me a grave where'er you will,
In a lowly plain or a lofty hill;
Make it among earth's humblest graves,
But not in a land where men are slaves.

Of the Emancipation Proclamation she wrote:

It shall flash through coming ages,
It shall light the distant years;
And eyes now dim with sorrow
Shall be brighter through their tears.

While Mrs. Harper was still prominently before the public appeared Albery A. Whitman, a Methodist minister, whose "Not a Man and Yet a Man" appeared in 1877. The work of this writer is the most baffling with which this book has to deal. It is diffuse, exhibits many lapses in taste, is uneven metrically, as if done in haste, and shows imitation on every hand. It imitates Whittier, Longfellow, Tennyson, Scott, Byron and Moore. "The Old Sac Village" and "Nanawawa's Suitors" are very evidently "Hiawatha" over again; and "Custer's Last Ride" is simply another version of "The Charge of the Light Brigade." "The Rape of Florida" exhibits the same general characteristics as the earlier poems.

And yet, whenever one has about decided that Whitman is not worthy of consideration, he insists on a revision of judgment. The fact is that he shows a decided faculty for brisk narration. This may be seen in "The House of the Aylors." He has, moreover, a romantic lavishness of description that, in spite of all technical faults, still has some degree of merit. The following quotations, taken respectively from "The Mowers" and "The Flight of Leeona," will exemplify both his extravagance and his possibilities in description:

> The tall forests swim in a crimson sea,
> Out of whose bright depths rising silently,
> Great golden spires shoot into the skies,
> Among the isles of cloudland high, that rise,
> Float, scatter, burst, drift off, and slowly fade,
> Deep in the twilight, shade succeeding shade.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And now she turns upon a mossy seat,
> Where sings a fern-bound stream beneath her feet,
> And breathes the orange in the swooning air;
> Where in her queenly pride the rose blooms fair,
> And sweet geranium waves her scented hair;
> There, gazing in the bright face of the stream,
> Her thoughts swim onward in a gentle dream.

In "A Dream of Glory" occur the lines:

The fairest blooms are born of humble weeds,
That faint and perish in the pathless wood;
And out of bitter life grow noble deeds
To pass unnoticed in the multitude.

Whitman's shortcomings become readily apparent when he attempts sustained work. "The Rape of Florida" is the longest poem yet written by a Negro in America, and also the only attempt by a member of the race to use the elaborate Spenserian stanza throughout a long piece of work. The story is concerned with the capture of the Seminoles in Florida through perfidy and the taking of them away to their new home in the West. It centers around three characters, Palmecho, an old chief, Ewald, his daughter, and Atlassa, a young Seminole who is Ewald's lover. The poem is decidedly diffuse; there is too much subjective description, too little strong characterization. Palmecho, instead of being a stout warrior, is a "chief of peace and kindly deeds." Stanzas of merit, however, occasionally strike the eye. The boat-song forces recognition as genuine poetry:

"Come now, my love, the moon is on the lake;
Upon the waters is my light canoe;
Come with me, love, and gladsome oars shall make
A music on the parting wave for you,—

Come o'er the waters deep and dark and blue;
Come where the lilies in the marge have sprung,
Come with me, love, for Oh, my love is true!"
This is the song that on the lake was sung,
The boatman sang it over when his heart was young.

In 1890 Whitman brought out an edition of "Not a Man and Yet a Man" and "The Rape of Florida," adding to these a collection of miscellaneous poems, "Drifted Leaves," and in 1901 he published "An Idyl of the South," an epic poem in two parts. It is to be regretted that he did not have the training that comes from the best university education. He had the taste and the talent to benefit from such culture in the greatest degree.

All who went before him were, of course, superseded in 1896 by Paul Laurence Dunbar; and Dunbar started a tradition. Throughout the country there sprang up imitators, and some of the imitations were more than fair. All of this, however, was a passing phenomenon. Those who are writing at the present day almost invariably eschew dialect and insist upon classic forms and measures. Prominent among these is James Weldon Johnson. Mr. Johnson has seen a varied career as teacher, writer, consul for the United States in foreign countries,

especially Nicaragua, and national organizer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He has written numerous songs, which have been set to music by his brother, Rosamond Johnson, or Harry T. Burleigh; he made for the Metropolitan Opera the English translation of the Spanish opera, "Goyescas," by Granados and Periquet; and in 1916, while associated with the *Age*, of New York, in a contest opened by the *Public Ledger*, of Philadelphia, to editorial writers all over the country, he won a third prize of two hundred dollars for a campaign editorial. The remarkable book, "Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man," half fact, half fiction, was published anonymously, but is generally credited to Mr. Johnson. Very recently (December, 1917) has appeared this writer's collection, "Fifty Years and Other Poems." In pure lyric flow he is best represented by two poems in the *Century*. One was a sonnet entitled, "Mother Night" (February, 1910):

Eternities before the first-born day,
Or ere the first sun fledged his wings of flame,
Calm Night, the everlasting and the same,
A brooding mother over chaos lay.

And whirling suns shall blaze and then decay,
Shall run their fiery courses and then claim
The haven of the darkness whence they came;
Back to Nirvanic peace shall grope their way.
So when my feeble sun of life burns out,
And sounded is the hour for my long sleep,
I shall, full weary of the feverish light,
Welcome the darkness without fear or doubt,
And, heavy-lidded, I shall softly creep
Into the quiet bosom of the Night.

When we think of the large number of those who have longed for success in artistic expression, and especially of the first singers of the old melodies, we could close this review with nothing better than Mr. Johnson's tribute, "O Black and Unknown Bards" (*Century*, November, 1908):

O black and unknown bards of long ago,
How came your lips to touch the sacred fire?
How, in your darkness, did you come to know
The power and beauty of the minstrel's lyre?
Who first from 'midst his bonds lifted his eyes?
Who first from out the still watch, lone and long,
Feeling the ancient faith of prophets rise
Within his dark-kept soul, burst into song?

There is a wide, wide wonder in it all,
That from degraded rest and servile toil,
The fiery spirit of the seer should call
These simple children of the sun and soil.

O black singers, gone, forgot, unfamed,
You—you alone, of all the long, long line
Of those who've sung untaught, unknown, unnamed,
Have stretched out upward, seeking the divine.

You sang not deeds of heroes or of kings:
No chant of bloody war, nor exulting pæan
Of arms-won triumphs; but your humble strings
You touched in chords with music empyrean.
You sang far better than you knew, the songs
That for your listeners' hungry hearts sufficed
Still live—but more than this to you belongs:
You sang a race from wood and stone to Christ.

VIII

ORATORS.—DOUGLASS AND WASHINGTON

THE Negro is peculiarly gifted as an orator. To magnificent gifts of voice he adds a fervor of sentiment and an appreciation of the possibilities of a great occasion that are indispensable in the work of one who excels in this field. Greater than any of these things, however, is the romantic quality that finds an outlet in vast reaches of imagery and a singularly figurative power of expression. Only this innate gift of rhetorical expression has accounted for the tremendous effects sometimes realized even by untutored members of the race. Its possibilities under the influences of culture and education are illimitable.

On one occasion Harriet Tubman, famous for her work in the Underground Railroad, was addressing an audience and describing a great battle in the Civil War. "And then," said she, "we saw the lightning, and that

was the guns; and then we heard the thunder, and that was the big guns; and then we heard the rain falling, and that was drops of blood falling; and when we came to git in the craps, it was dead men that we reaped." * All through the familiar melodies one finds the pathos and the poetry of this imagery. Two unusual individuals, untutored but highly gifted in their own spheres, in the course of the last century proved eminently successful by joining this rhetorical faculty to their native earnestness. One of these was the anti-slavery speaker, Sojourner Truth. Tall, majestic, and yet quite uneducated, this interesting woman sometimes dazzled her audiences by her sudden turns of expression. Anecdotes of her quick and startling replies are numberless. The other character was John Jasper, of Richmond, Va., famous three decades ago for his "Sun do move" sermon. Jasper preached not only on this theme, but also on "Dry bones in the valley," the glories of the New Jerusalem, and many similar subjects that have been used by other preachers, sometimes with hardly less effect, throughout the South. When one made

*Reported by A. B. Hart, in "Slavery and Abolition," 209.

all discount for the tinsel and the dialect, he still would have found in the work of John Jasper much of the power of the true orator.

Other men have joined to this love for figurative expression the advantages of culture; and a common characteristic, thoroughly typical of the romantic quality constantly present, is a fondness for biblical phrase. As representative might be remarked Robert B. Elliott, famous for his speech in Congress on the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Bill; John Mercer Langston, also distinguished for many political addresses; M. C. B. Mason, for years a prominent representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and Charles T. Walker, still the most popular preacher of the Negro Baptists. A new and telling form of public speaking, destined to have more and more importance, is that just now best cultivated by Dr. DuBois, who, with little play of voice or gesture, but with the earnestness of conviction, drives home his message with instant effect.

In any consideration of oratory one must constantly bear in mind, of course, the importance of the spoken word and the personal equation. At the same time it must be re-

membered that many of the most worthy addresses made by Negroes have not been preserved in accessible form. Again and again, in some remote community, with true eloquence has an untutored preacher brought comfort and inspiration to a struggling people. J. C. Price, for years president of Livingstone College in North Carolina, was one of the truest orators the Negro race ever had, and many who heard him will insist that he was foremost. His name has become in some quarters a synonym for eloquence, and he certainly appeared on many noteworthy occasions with marked effect. His reputation will finally suffer, however, for the reason given, that his speeches are not now generally accessible. Not one is in Mrs. Dunbar's "Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence."

One of the most effective occasional speakers within recent years has been Reverdy C. Ransom, of the A. M. E. Church. In his great moments Mr. Ransom has given the impression of the true orator. He has little humor, is stately and dignified, but bitter in satire and invective. There is, in fact, much in his speaking to remind one of Frederick Douglass. One

of his greatest efforts was that on the occasion of the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Garrison, in Faneuil Hall, Boston, December 11, 1905. Said he, in part:

What kind of Negroes do the American people want? That they must have the Negro in some relation is no longer a question of serious debate. What kind of Negroes do the American people want? Do they want a voteless Negro in a republic founded upon universal suffrage? Do they want a Negro who shall not be permitted to participate in the government which he must support with his treasure and defend with his blood? Do they want a Negro who shall consent to be set aside as forming a distinct industrial class, permitted to rise no higher than the level of serfs or peasants? Do they want a Negro who shall accept an inferior social position, not as a degradation, but as the just operation of the laws of caste based on color? Do they want a Negro who will avoid friction between the races by consenting to occupy the place to which white men may choose to assign him? What kind of a Negro do the American people want? . . . Taught by the Declaration of Independence, sustained by the Constitution of the United States, enlightened by the education of our schools, this nation can no more resist the advancing tread of the hosts of the oncoming blacks than it can bind the stars or halt the resistless motion of the tide.*

*Quoted from "Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence," 314–5.

Two men, by reason of great natural endowment, a fitting appreciation of great occasions, and the consistency with which they produced their effects, have won an undisputed place in any consideration of American orators. These men were Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington.

Frederick Douglass was born in 1817 and lived for ten years as a slave upon a Maryland plantation. Then he was bought by a Baltimore shipbuilder. He learned to read, and, being attracted by "The Lady of the Lake," when he escaped in 1838 and went disguised as a sailor to New Bedford, Mass., he adopted the name *Douglas* (spelling it with two *s's*, however). He lived for several years in New Bedford, being assisted by Garrison in his efforts for an education. In 1841, at an anti-slavery convention in Nantucket, he exhibited such intelligence, and showed himself the possessor of such a remarkable voice, that he was made the agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. He now lectured extensively in England and the United States, and English friends raised £150 to enable him regularly to purchase his freedom. For some years be-

fore the Civil War he lived in Rochester, N. Y., where he published a paper, *The North Star*, and where there is now a public monument to him. Later in life he became Recorder of Deeds in the District of Columbia, and then Minister to Hayti. At the time of his death in 1895 Douglass had won for himself a place of unique distinction. Large of heart and of mind, he was interested in every forward movement for his people; but his charity embraced all men and all races. His reputation was international, and to-day many of his speeches are to be found in the standard works on oratory.

Mr. Chesnutt has admirably summed up the personal characteristics of the oratory of Douglass. He tells us that "Douglass possessed, in large measure, the physical equipment most impressive in an orator. He was a man of magnificent figure, tall, strong, his head crowned with a mass of hair which made a striking element of his appearance. He had deep-set and flashing eyes, a firm, well-moulded chin, a countenance somewhat severe in repose, but capable of a wide range of expression. His voice was rich and melodious, and of

carrying power." * Douglass was distinctly dignified, eloquent, and majestic; he could not be funny or witty. Sorrow for the slave, and indignation against the master, gave force to his words, though, in his later years, his oratory became less and less heavy and more refined. He was not always on the popular side, nor was he always exactly logical; thus he incurred much censure for his opposition to the exodus of the Negro from the South in 1879. For half a century, however, he was the outstanding figure of the race in the United States.

Perhaps the greatest speech of his life was that which Douglass made at Rochester on the 5th of July, 1852. His subject was "American Slavery," and he spoke with his strongest invective. The following paragraphs from the introduction will serve to illustrate his fondness for interrogation and biblical phrase:

> Pardon me, and allow me to ask, Why am I called upon to speak here to-day? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice embodied in that Declaration of Independence extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to

* "Frederick Douglass," 107–8.

confess the benefits, and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

. . . . . .

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that had wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.*

The years and emancipation and the progress of his people in the new day gave a more hopeful tone to some of the later speeches of the orator. In an address on the 7th of December, 1890, he said:

I have seen dark hours in my life, and I have seen the darkness gradually disappearing, and the light gradually increasing. One by one I have seen obstacles removed, errors corrected, prejudices softened, proscriptions relinquished, and my people advancing in all the elements that make up the sum of general welfare. I remember that God reigns in eternity, and that, whatever delays, disappointments, and discouragements may come, truth, justice, liberty, and humanity will prevail.†

* Quoted from Williams, II, 435–6.

† Quoted from Foreword in "In Memoriam: Frederick Douglass."

Booker T. Washington was born about 1858, in Franklin County, Virginia. After the Civil War his mother and stepfather removed to Malden, W. Va., where, when he became large enough, he worked in the salt furnaces and the coal mines. He had always been called Booker, but it was not until he went to a little school at his home and found that he needed a surname that, on the spur of the moment, he adopted *Washington*. In 1872 he worked his way to Hampton Institute, where he paid his expenses by assisting as a janitor. Graduating in 1875, he returned to Malden and taught school for three years. He then attended for a year Wayland Seminary in Washington (now incorporated in Virginia Union University in Richmond), and in 1879 was appointed an instructor at Hampton. In 1881 there came to General Armstrong, principal of Hampton Institute, a call from the little town of Tuskegee, Ala., for someone to organize and become the principal of a normal school which the people wanted to start in that place. He recommended Mr. Washington, who opened the school on the 4th of July in an old church and a little shanty, with an attend-

ance of thirty pupils. In 1895 Mr. Washington came into national prominence by a remarkable speech at the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, and after that he interested educators and thinking people generally in the working out of his ideas of practical education. He was the author of several books along lines of industrial education and character-building, and in his later years only one or two other men in America could rival his power to attract and hold great audiences. Harvard University conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts in 1896, and Dartmouth that of Doctor of Laws in 1901. He died in 1915.

In the course of his career Mr. Washington delivered hundreds of addresses on distinguished occasions. He was constantly in demand at colleges and universities, great educational meetings, and gatherings of a civic or public character. His Atlanta speech is famous for the so-called compromise with the white South: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." On receiving his degree at Harvard in 1896, he made a speech in which he emphasized the fact

that the welfare of the richest and most cultured person in New England was bound up with that of the humblest man in Alabama, and that each man was his brother's keeper. Along somewhat the same line he spoke the next year at the unveiling of the Robert Gould Shaw Monument in Boston. At the Chicago Peace Jubilee in 1898 he reviewed the conduct of the Negro in the wars of the United States, making a powerful plea for justice to a race that had always chosen the better part in the wars of the country. Mr. Washington delivered many addresses, but he never really surpassed the feeling and point and oratorical quality of these early speeches. The following paragraph from the Atlanta speech will illustrate his power of vivid and apt illustration:

> A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal: "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back: "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered: "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and a fourth signal for water was answered: "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket,

and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land, or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next door neighbor, I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.*

The power to realize with fine feeling the possibilities of an occasion may be illustrated from the speech at Harvard:

If through me, an humble representative, seven millions of my people in the South might be permitted to send a message to Harvard—Harvard that offered up on death's altar young Shaw, and Russell, and Lowell, and scores of others, that we might have a free and united country—that message would be, Tell them that the sacrifice was not in vain. Tell them that by habits of thrift and economy, by way of the industrial school and college, we are coming up. We are crawling up, working up, yea, bursting up—often through oppression, unjust discrimination and prejudice, but through them all we are coming up, and with proper habits, intelligence, and property, there is no power on earth that can permanently stay our progress.†

The eloquence of Douglass differed from that of Washington as does the power of a gifted

* Quoted from "Story of My Life and Work," 165–6.
† Quoted from "Story of My Life and Work," 210–11.

orator differ from the force of a finished public speaker. The one was subjective; the other was objective. Douglass swayed his audience, and even himself, by the sweep of his passion and rhetoric; Washington studied every detail and weighed every word, always keeping in mind the final impression to be made. Douglass was an idealist, impatient for the day of perfect fruition; Washington was an opportunist, making the most of each chance as it came. The one voiced the sorrows of the Old Testament, and for the moment produced the more tremendous effect; the other longed for the blessing of the New Testament and spoke with lasting result. Both loved their people and each in his own way worked as he could best see the light. By his earnestness each in his day gained a hearing; by their sincerity both found a place in the oratory not only of the Negro but of the world.

IX

THE STAGE

IN no other field has the Negro with artistic aspirations found the road so hard as in that of the classic drama. In spite of the far-reaching influence of the Negro on American life, it is only within the last two years that this distinct racial element has begun to receive serious attention. If we pass over Othello as professedly a Moor rather than a Negro, we find that the Negro, as he has been presented on the English or American stage, is best represented by such a character as Mungo in the comic opera, "The Padlock," on the boards at Drury Lane in 1768. Mungo is the slave of a West Indian planter; he becomes profane in the second act and sings a burlesque song. Here, as elsewhere, there was no dramatic or sympathetic study of the race. Even Uncle Tom was a conventional embodi-

ment of patience and meekness rather than a highly individualized character.

On the legitimate stage the Negro was not wanted. That he could succeed, however, was shown by such a career as that of Ira Aldridge. This distinguished actor, making his way from America to the freer life of Europe, entered upon the period of his greatest artistic success when, in 1833, at Covent Garden, he played Othello to the Iago of Edmund Kean, the foremost actor of the time. He was universally ranked as a great tragedian. In the years 1852–5 he played in Germany. In 1857 the King of Sweden invited him to visit Stockholm. The King of Prussia bestowed upon him a first-class medal of the arts and sciences. The Emperor of Austria complimented him with an autograph letter; the Czar of Russia gave him a decoration, and various other honors were showered upon him.

Such is the noblest tradition of the Negro on the stage. In course of time, however, because of the new blackface ministrelsy that became popular soon after the Civil War, all association of the Negro with the classic drama was effectively erased from the public mind.

Near the turn of the century some outlet was found in light musical comedy. Prominent in the transition from minstrelsy to the new form were Bob Cole and Ernest Hogan; and the representative musical comedy companies have been those of Cole and Johnson, and Williams and Walker. Bert Williams is to-day generally remarked as one of the two or three foremost comedians on the American stage. Even musical comedy, however, is not so prominent as it was ten years ago, by reason of the competition of vaudeville and moving-pictures; and any representation of the Negro on the stage at the present time is likely to be either a burlesque, or, as in such pictures as those of "The Birth of a Nation," a deliberate and malicious libel on the race.

In different ones of the Negro colleges, however, and elsewhere, are there those who have dreamed of a true Negro drama—a drama that should get away from the minstrelsy and the burlesque and honestly present Negro characters face to face with all the problems that test the race in the crucible of American civilization. The representative institutions give frequent amateur productions, not only of

classical plays, but also of sincere attempts at the faithful portrayal of Negro character. In even wider fields, however, is the possibility of the material for serious dramatic treatment being tested. In the spring of 1914 "Granny Maumee," by Ridgely Torrence, a New York dramatist, was produced by the Stage Society of New York. The part of Granny Maumee was taken by Dorothy Donnelly, one of the most emotional and sincere of American actresses; two performances were given, and Carl Van Vechten, writing of the occasion in the New York *Press*, said: "It is as important an event in our theater as the first play by Synge was to the Irish movement." Another experiment was "Children," by Guy Bolton and Tom Carlton, presented by the Washington Square Players in March, 1916, a little play in which a mother shoots her son rather than give him up to a lynching party. In April, 1917, "Granny Maumee," with two other short plays by Mr. Torrence, "The Rider of Dreams," and "Simon the Cyrenian," was again put on the stage in New York, this time with a company of colored actors, prominent among whom were Opal Cooper and Inez

Clough. This whole production, advertised as "the first colored dramatic company to appear on Broadway," was under the patronage of Mrs. Norman Hapgood and the direction of Robert Edmond Jones, and its success was such as to give hopes of much greater things in the future.

Three or four other representative efforts within the race itself in the great field of the drama must be remarked. One of the most sincere was "The Exile," written by E. C. Williams, and presented at the Howard Theater in Washington, May 29, 1915, a play dealing with an episode in the life of Lorenzo de Medici. The story used is thoroughly dramatic, and that part of the composition that is in blank verse is of a notable degree of smoothness. "The Star of Ethiopia," by Dr. DuBois, was a pageant, elaborately presented. Originally produced in New York in 1913, it also saw performances in Washington and Philadelphia. The spring of 1916 witnessed the beginning of the work of the Edward Sterling Wright Players, of New York. This company used the legitimate drama and made a favorable impression, especially by its production of

"Othello." At present special interest attaches to the work of the Lafayette Players in New York, who have already made commendable progress in the production of popular plays.

The field is comparatively new. It is, however, one peculiarly adapted to the ability of the Negro race, and at least enough has been done so far to show that both Negro effort in the classic drama and the serious portrayal of Negro life on the stage are worthy of respectful consideration.

X

PAINTERS.—HENRY O. TANNER

PAINTING has long been a medium through which the artistic spirit of the race yearned to find expression. As far back as in the work of Phillis Wheatley there is a poem addressed to "S. M." (Scipio Moorhead), "a young African painter," one of whose subjects was the story of Damon and Pythias. It was a hundred years more, however, before there was really artistic production. E. M. Bannister, whose home was at Providence, though little known to the younger generation, was very prominent forty years ago. He gathered about himself a coterie of artists and rich men that formed the nucleus of the Rhode Island Art Club, and one of his pictures took a medal at the Centennial Exposition of 1876. William A. Harper, who died in 1910, was a product of the Chicago Art Institute, at whose exhibitions his pictures received much favorable com-

ment about 1908 and 1910. On his return from his first period of study in Paris his "Avenue of Poplars" took a prize of one hundred dollars at the Institute. Other typical subjects were "The Last Gleam," "The Hillside," and "The Gray Dawn." Great hopes were awakened a few years ago by the landscapes of Richard L. Brown; and the portrait work of Edwin A. Harleston is destined to become better and better known. William E. Scott, of Indianapolis, is becoming more and more distinguished in mural work, landscape, and portraiture, and among all the painters of the race now working in this country is outstanding. He has spent several years in Paris. "La Pauvre Voisine," accepted by the Salon in 1912, was afterwards bought by the Argentine government. A second picture exhibited in the Salon in 1913, "La Misère," was reproduced in the French catalogue and took first prize at the Indiana State Fair the next year. "La Connoisseure" was exhibited in the Royal Academy in London in 1913. Mr. Scott has done the mural work in ten public schools in Chicago, four in Indianapolis, and especially was he commissioned by the city of Indianapolis to decorate two units

HENRY O. TANNER

in the city hospital, this task embracing three hundred life-size figures. Some of his effects in coloring are very striking, and in several of his recent pictures he has emphasized racial subjects.

The painter of assured fame and commanding position is Henry Ossawa Tanner.

The early years of this artist were a record of singular struggle and sacrifice. Born in Pittsburgh in 1859, the son of a minister of very limited means, he received his early education in Philadelphia. For years he had to battle against uncertain health. In his thirteenth year, seeing an artist at work, he decided that he too would become a painter, and he afterwards became a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. While still a very young man, he attempted drawings of all sorts and sent these to various New York publishers, only to see them promptly returned. A check, however, for forty dollars for one that did not return encouraged him, and a picture, "A Lion at Home," from the exhibition of the Academy of Design, brought eighty dollars. He now became a photographer in Atlanta, Ga., but met with no real success; and for

two years he taught drawing at Clark University in Atlanta. In this period came a summer of struggle in the mountains of North Carolina, and the knowledge that a picture that had originally sold for fifteen dollars had brought two hundred and fifty dollars at an auction in Philadelphia. Desiring now to go to Europe, and being encouraged by Bishop and Mrs. Hartzell, the young painter gave in Cincinnati an exhibition of his work. The exhibition failed; not a picture was regularly sold. Bishop and Mrs. Hartzell, however, gave the artist a sum for the entire collection, and thus equipped he set sail for Rome, January 4, 1891, going by way of Liverpool and Paris.

In the story of his career that he contributed to the *World's Work* some years ago, Mr. Tanner gave an interesting account of his early days in Paris. Acquaintance with the great French capital induced him to abandon thoughts of going to Rome; but there followed five years of pitiless economy, broken only by a visit to Philadelphia, where he sold some pictures. He was encouraged, however, by Benjamin Constant and studied in the Julien Academy. In his early years he had given

attention to animals and landscape, but more and more he was drawn towards religious subjects. "Daniel in the Lions' Den" in the Salon in 1896 brought "honorable mention," the artist's first official recognition. He was inspired, and very soon afterwards he made his first visit to Palestine, the land that was afterwards to mean so much to him in his work. "The Resurrection of Lazarus," in 1897, was bought by the French government, and now hangs in the Luxembourg. The enthusiasm awakened by this picture was so great that a friend wrote to the painter at Venice: "Come home, Tanner, to see the crowds behold your picture." After twenty years of heart-breaking effort Henry Tanner had become a recognized artist. His later career is a part of the history of the world's art. He won a third-class medal at the Salon in 1897, a second-class medal in 1907, second-class medals at the Paris Exposition in 1900, at the Buffalo Exposition in 1901, and at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, a gold medal at San Francisco in 1915, the Walter Lippincott Prize in Philadelphia in 1900, and the Harris Prize of five hundred dollars, in 1906, for the best picture in the

annual exhibition of American paintings at the Chicago Art Institute.

Mr. Tanner's later life has been spent in Paris, with trips to the Far East, to Palestine, to Egypt, to Algiers, and Morocco. Some years ago he joined the colony of artists at Trepied, where he has built a commodious home and studio. Miss MacChesney has described this for us: "His studio is an ideal workroom, being high-ceilinged, spacious, and having the least possible furniture, utterly free from masses of useless studio stuff and paraphernalia. The walls are of a light gray, and at one end hangs a fine tapestry. Oriental carved wooden screens are at the doors and windows. Leading out of it is a small room having a domed ceiling and picturesque high windows. In this simply furnished room he often poses his models, painting himself in the large studio, the sliding door between being a small one. He can often make use of lamplight effects, the daylight in the larger room not interfering." Within recent years the artist has kept pace with some of the newer schools by brilliant experimentation in color and composition. Moonlight scenes appeal

to him most. He seldom paints other than biblical subjects, except perhaps a portrait such as that of the Khedive or Rabbi Wise. A landscape may attract him, but it is sure to be idealized. He is thoroughly romantic in tone, and in spirit, if not in technique, there is much to connect him with Holman Hunt, the Pre-Raphaelite painter. In fact he long had in mind, even if he has not actually worked out, a picture entitled, "The Scapegoat."

"The Annunciation," as well as "The Resurrection of Lazarus," was bought by the French government; and "The Two Disciples at the Tomb" was bought by the Chicago Art Institute. "The Bagpipe Lesson" and "The Banjo Lesson" are in the library at Hampton Institute. Other prominent titles are: "Christ and Nicodemus," "Jews Waiting at the Wall of Solomon," "Stephen Before the Council," "Moses and the Burning Bush," "The Mothers of the Bible" (a series of five paintings of Mary, Hagar, Sarah, Rachel, and the mother of Moses, that marked the commencement of paintings containing all or nearly all female figures), "Christ at the Home of Mary and

Martha," "The Return of the Holy Women," and "The Five Virgins." Of "Christ and His Disciples on the Road to Bethany," one of the most remarkable of all the pictures for subdued coloring, the painter says, "I have taken the tradition that Christ never spent a day in Jerusalem, but at the close of day went to Bethany, returning to the city of strife in the morning." Of "A Flight into Egypt" he says: "Never shall I forget the magnificence of two Persian Jews that I once saw at Rachel's Tomb; what a magnificent 'Abraham' either one of them would have made! Nor do I forget a ride one stormy Christmas night to Bethlehem. Dark clouds swept the moonlit skies and it took little imagination to close one's eyes to the flight of time and see in those hurrying travelers the crowds that hurried Bethlehemward on that memorable night of the Nativity, or to transpose the scene and see in each hurrying group 'A Flight into Egypt.'" As to which one of all these pictures excels the others critics are not in perfect agreement. "The Resurrection of Lazurus" is in subdued coloring, while "The Annunciation" is noted for its effects of

light and shade. This latter picture must in any case rank very high in any consideration of the painter's work. It is a powerful portrayal of the Virgin at the moment when she learns of her great mission.

Mr. Tanner has the very highest ideals for his art. These could hardly be better stated than in his own words: "It has very often seemed to me that many painters of religious subjects (in our time) seem to forget that their pictures should be as much works of art (regardless of the subject) as are other paintings with less holy subjects. To suppose that the fact of the religious painter having a more elevated subject than his brother artist makes it unnecessary for him to consider his picture as an artistic production, or that he can be less thoughtful about a color harmony, for instance, than he who selects any other subject, simply proves that he is less of an artist than he who gives the subject his best attention." Certainly, no one could ever accuse Henry Tanner of insincere workmanship. His whole career is an inspiration and a challenge to aspiring painters, and his work is a monument of sturdy endeavor and exalted achievement.

XI

SCULPTORS.—META WARRICK FULLER

IN sculpture, as well as in painting, there has been a beginning of highly artistic achievement. The first person to come into prominence was Edmonia Lewis, born in New York in 1845. A sight of the statue of Franklin, in Boston, inspired within this young woman the desire also to "make a stone man." Garrison introduced her to a sculptor who encouraged her and gave her a few suggestions, but altogether she received little instruction in her art. In 1865 she attracted considerable attention by a bust of Robert Gould Shaw, exhibited in Boston. In this same year she went to Rome to continue her studies, and two years later took up her permanent residence there. Among her works are: "The Freedwoman," "The Death of Cleopatra" (exhibited at the exposition in Philadelphia in 1876), "Asleep," "The Marriage of Hiawatha," and

META WARRICK FULLER

"Madonna with the Infant Christ." Among her busts in terra cotta are those of John Brown, Charles Sumner, Lincoln, and Longfellow. Most of the work of Edmonia Lewis is in Europe. More recently the work of Mrs. May Howard Jackson, of Washington, has attracted the attention of the discerning. This sculptor has made several busts, among her subjects being Rev. F. J. Grimké and Dr. DuBois, and "Mother and Child" is one of her best studies. Bertina Lee, of Trenton, N. J., is one of the promising young sculptors. She is from the Trenton Art School and has already won several valuable prizes.

The sculptor at the present time of assured position is Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller.

Meta Vaux Warrick was born in Philadelphia, June 9, 1877. She first compelled serious recognition of her talent by her work in the Pennsylvania School of Industrial Art, for which she had won a scholarship, and which she attended for four years. Here one of her first original pieces in clay was a head of Medusa, which, with its hanging jaw, beads of gore, and eyes starting from their sockets, marked her as a sculptor of the horrible. In

her graduating year, 1898, she won a prize for metal work by a crucifix upon which hung the figure of Christ torn by anguish, also honorable mention for her work in modeling. In her post-graduate year she won the George K. Crozier first prize for the best general work in modeling for the year, her particular piece being the "Procession of Arts and Crafts." In 1899 the young student went to Paris, where she worked and studied for three years, chiefly at Colarossi's Academy. Her work brought her in contact with St. Gaudens and other artists; and finally there came a day when the great Rodin himself, thrilled by the figure in "Secret Sorrow," a man represented as eating his heart out, in the attitude of a father beamed upon the young woman and said, "Mademoiselle, you are a sculptor; you have the sense of form." "The Wretched," one of the artist's masterpieces, was exhibited in the Salon in 1903, and along with it went "The Impenitent Thief"; and at one of Byng's exhibitions in L'Art Nouveau galleries it was remarked of her that "under her strong and supple hands the clay has leaped into form: a whole turbulent world seems to have forced

itself into the cold and dead material." On her return to America the artist resumed her studies at the School of Industrial Art, winning, in 1904, the Battles first prize for pottery. In 1907 she was called on for a series of tableaux representing the advance of the Negro, for the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition, and later (1913) for a group for the New York State Emancipation Proclamation Commission. In 1909 Meta Vaux Warrick became the wife of Dr. Solomon C. Fuller, of Framingham, Mass. A disastrous fire in 1910 destroyed some of her most valuable pieces while they were in storage in Philadelphia. Only a few examples of her early work, that for one reason or another happened to be elsewhere, were saved. In May, 1914, however, she had sufficiently recovered from this blow to be able to hold a public exhibition of her work. Mrs. Fuller resides in Framingham, has a happy family of three boys, and in the midst of a busy life still finds some time for the practice of her art.

The fire of 1910 destroyed the following productions: Secret Sorrow, Silenus, Œdipus, Brittany Peasant, Primitive Man, two of the heads from Three Gray Women, Peeping Tom,

Falstaff, Oriental Dancer, Portrait of William Thomas, The Wrestlers, Death in the Wind, Désespoir, The Man with a Thorn, The Man who Laughed, the Two-Step, Sketch for a Monument, Wild Fire, and the following studies in Afro-American types: An Old Woman, The Schoolboy, The Comedian (George W. Walker), The Student, The Artist, and Mulatto Child, as well as a few unfinished pieces. Such a misfortune has only rarely befallen a rising artist. Some of the sculptor's most remarkable work was included in the list just given.

Fortunately surviving were the following: The Wretched (cast in bronze and remaining in Europe), Man Carrying Dead Body, Medusa, Procession of Arts and Crafts, Portrait of the late William Still, John the Baptist (the only piece of her work made in Paris that the sculptor now has), Sylvia (later destroyed by accident), and Study of Expression.

The exhibition of 1914 included the following: A Classic Dancer, Brittany Peasant (a reproduction of the piece destroyed), Study of Woman's Head, "A Drink, Please" (a statuette of Tommy Fuller), Mother and Baby,

A Young Equestrian (Tommy Fuller), "So Big" (Solomon Fuller, Jr.), Menelik II of Abyssinia, A Girl's Head, Portrait of a Child, The Pianist (portrait of Mrs. Maud Cuney Hare), Portrait of S. Coleridge-Taylor, Relief Study of a Woman's Head, Medallion Portrait of a Child (Tommy Fuller), Medallion Portrait of Dr. A. E. P. Rockwell, Statuette of a Woman, Second model of group made for the New York State Emancipation Proclamation Commission (with two fragments from the final model of this), Portrait of Dr. A. E. P. Rockwell, Four Figures (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter) for over-mantel panel, Portrait-Bust of a Child (Solomon Fuller, Jr.), Portrait-Bust of a Man (Dr. S. C. Fuller), John the Baptist, Danse Macabre, Menelik II in profile, Portrait of a Woman, The Jester.

Since 1914 the artist has produced several of her strongest pieces. "Peace Halting the Ruthlessness of War" in May, 1917, took a second prize in a competition under the auspices of the Massachusetts Branch of the Woman's Peace Party. Similarly powerful are "Watching for Dawn," "Mother and Child," "Immigrant in America," and "The Silent

Appeal." Noteworthy, too, are "The Flower-Holder," "The Fountain-Boy," and "Life in Quest of Peace." The sculptor has also produced numerous statuettes, novelties, etc., for commercial purposes, and just now she is at work on a motherhood series.

From time to time one observes in this enumeration happy subjects. Such, for instance, are "The Dancing Girl," "The Wrestlers," and "A Young Equestrian." These are frequently winsome, but, as will be shown in a moment, they are not the artist's characteristic productions. Nor was the Jamestown series of tableaux. This was a succession of fourteen groups (originally intended for seventeen) containing in all one hundred and fifty figures. The purpose was by the construction of appropriate models, dramatic groupings, and the use of proper scenic accessories, to trace in chronological order the general progress of the Negro race. The whole, of course, had its peculiar interest for the occasion; but the artist had to work against unnumbered handicaps of every sort; her work, in fact, was not so much that of a sculptor as a designer; and, while the whole production took considerable

energy, she has naturally never regarded it as her representative work.

Certain productions, however, by reason of their unmistakable show of genius, call for special consideration. These are invariably tragic or serious in tone.

Prime in order, and many would say in power, is "The Wretched." Seven figures representing as many forms of human anguish greet the eye. A mother yearns for the loved ones she has lost. An old man, wasted by hunger and disease, waits for death. Another, bowed by shame, hides his face from the sun. A sick child is suffering from some terrible hereditary trouble; a youth realizes with despair that the task before him is too great for his strength; and a woman is afflicted with some mental disease. Crowning all is the philosopher, who, suffering through sympathy with the others, realizes his powerlessness to relieve them and gradually sinks into the stoniness of despair.

"The Impenitent Thief," admitted to the Salon along with "The Wretched," was demolished in 1904, after being subjected to a series of unhappy accidents. It also defied

convention. Heroic in size, the thief hung on the cross, all the while distorted by anguish. Hardened, unsympathetic, blasphemous, he was still superb in his presumption, and he was one of the artist's most powerful conceptions.

"Man Carrying Dead Body" portrays a scene from a battlefield. In it the sculptor has shown the length to which duty will spur one on. A man bears across his shoulder the body of a comrade that has evidently lain on the battlefield for days, and though the thing is horrible, he lashes it to his back and totters under the great weight until he can find a place for decent burial. To every one there comes such a duty; each one has his own burden to bear in silence.

Two earlier pieces, "Secret Sorrow," and "Œdipus," had the same marked characteristics. The first represented a man, worn and gaunt, as actually bending his head and eating out his own heart. The figure was the personification of lost ambition, shattered ideals, and despair. For "Œdipus" the sculptor chose the hero of the old Greek legend at the moment when, realizing that he has killed his father and married his mother, he tears his

eyes out. The artist's later conception, "Three Gray Women," from the legend of Perseus, was in similar vein. It undertook to portray the Græ, the three sisters who had but one eye and one tooth among them.

Perhaps the most haunting creation of Mrs. Fuller is "John the Baptist." With head slightly upraised and with eyes looking into the eternal, the prophet rises above all sordid earthly things and soars into the divine. All faith and hope and love are in his face, all poetry and inspiration in his eyes. It is a conception that, once seen, can never be forgotten.

The second model of the group for the New York State Emancipation Proclamation Commission (two feet high, the finished group as exhibited being eight feet high) represents a recently emancipated Negro youth and maiden standing beneath a gnarled, decapitated tree that has the semblance of a human hand stretched over them. Humanity is pushing them out into the world, while at the same time the hand of Fate, with obstacles and drawbacks, is restraining them in the exercise of their new freedom. In the attitudes

of the two figures is strikingly portrayed the uncertainty of those embarking on a new life, and in their countenances one reads all the eagerness and the courage and the hope that is theirs. The whole is one of the artist's most ambitious efforts.

"Immigrant in America" was inspired by two lines from Robert Haven Schauffler's "Scum of the Earth":

> Children in whose frail arms shall rest
> Prophets and singers and saints of the West.

An American mother, the parent of one strong healthy child, is seen welcoming the immigrant mother of many children to the land of plenty. The work is capable of wide application. Along with it might be mentioned a suffrage medallion and a smaller piece, "The Silent Appeal." This last is a very strong piece of work. It represents the mother capable of producing and caring for three children as making a silent request for the suffrage (or peace, or justice, or any other noble cause). The work is characterized by a singular note of dignity.

"Peace Halting the Ruthlessness of War," the recent prize piece, represents War as

mounted on a mighty steed and trampling to death helpless human beings, while in one hand he bears a spear on which he has impaled the head of one of his victims. As he goes on in what seems his irresistible career Peace meets him on the way and commands him to cease his ravages. The work as exhibited was in gray-green wax and treated its subject with remarkable spirit. It must take rank as one of the four or five of the strongest productions of the artist.

Meta Warrick Fuller's work may be said to fall into two divisions, the romantic and the social. The first is represented by such things as "The Wretched" and "Secret Sorrow," the second by "Immigrant in America" and "The Silent Appeal." The transition may be seen in "Watching for Dawn," a group that shows seven figures, in various attitudes of prayer, watchfulness, and resignation, as watching for the coming of daylight, or peace. In technique this is like "The Wretched," in spirit it is like the later work. It is as if the sculptor's own seer, John the Baptist, had, by his vision, summoned her away from the ghastly and horrible to the everyday problems of needy humanity.

There are many, however, who hope that she will not utterly forsake the field in which she first became famous. Her early work is not delicate or pretty; it is gruesome and terrible; but it is also intense and vital, and from it speaks the very tragedy of the Negro race.

XII

MUSIC

THE foremost name on the roll of Negro composers is that of a man whose home was in England, but who in so many ways identified himself with the Negroes of the United States that he deserves to be considered here. He visited America, found the inspiration for much of his best work in African themes, and his name at once comes to mind in any consideration of the history of the Negro in music.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor * (1875–1912) was born in London, the son of a physician who was a native of Sierra Leone, and an English mother. He began the study of the violin when he was no more than six years old, and as he grew older he emphasized more and more

* This account of Coleridge-Taylor is based largely, but not wholly, upon the facts as given in Grove's Dictionary of Music (1910 edition, Macmillan). The article on the composer ends with a fairly complete list of works up to 1910.

the violin and the piano. At the age of ten he entered the choir of St. George's, at Croydon, and a little later became alto singer at St. Mary Magdalene's, Croydon. In 1890 he entered the Royal College of Music as a student of the violin; and he also became a student of Stanford's in composition, in which department he won a scholarship in 1893. In 1894 he was graduated with honor. His earliest published work was the anthem, "In Thee, O Lord" (1892); but he gave frequent performances of chamber music at student concerts in his earlier years; one of his symphonies was produced in 1896 under Stanford's direction, and "a quintet for clarinet and strings in F sharp minor (played at the Royal College in 1895) was given in Berlin by the Joachim Quartet, and a string quartet in D minor dates from 1896." Coleridge-Taylor became world-famous by the production of the first part of his "Hiawatha" trilogy, "Hiawatha's Wedding-Feast," at the Royal College, November 11, 1898. He at once took rank as one of the foremost living English composers. The second part of the trilogy, "The Death of Minnehaha," was given at the North Staffordshire

Festival in the autumn of 1899; and the third, "Hiawatha's Departure," by the Royal Choral Society, in Albert Hall, March 22, 1900. The whole work was a tremendous success such as even the composer himself never quite duplicated. Requests for new compositions for festival purposes now became numerous, and in response to the demand were produced "The Blind Girl of Castél-Cuillé" (Leeds, 1901), "Meg Blane" (Sheffield, 1902), "The Atonement" (Hereford, 1903), and "Kubla Khan" (Handel Society, 1906). Coleridge-Taylor also wrote the incidental music for the four romantic plays by Stephen Phillips produced at His Majesty's Theatre, as follows: "Herod," 1900; "Ulysses," 1901; "Nero," 1902; "Faust," 1908; as well as incidental music for "Othello" (the composition for the orchestra being later adapted as a suite for pianoforte), and for "A Tale of Old Japan," the words of which were by Alfred Noyes. In 1904 he was appointed conductor of the Handel Society. The composer's most distinctive work is probably that reflecting his interest in the Negro folk-song. "Characteristic of the melancholy beauty, barbaric color,

charm of musical rhythm and vehement passion of the true Negro music are his symphonic pianoforte selections based on Negro melodies from Africa and America: the 'African Suite,' a group of pianoforte pieces, the 'African Romances' (words by Paul L. Dunbar), the 'Songs of Slavery,' 'Three Choral Ballads' and 'African Dances,' and a suite for violin and pianoforte." * The complete list of the works of Coleridge-Taylor would include also the following: "Southern Love Songs," "Dream-Lovers" (an operetta), "Gipsy Suite" (for violin and piano), "Solemn Prelude" (for orchestra, first produced at the Worcester Festival, 1899), "Nourmahal's Song and Dance" (for piano), "Scenes from an Everyday Romance," "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors" (concert march for orchestra), "Five Choral Ballads" to words by Longfellow (produced at the Norwich Festival, 1905), "Moorish Dance" (for piano), "Six Sorrow Songs," several vocal duets, and the anthems, "Now Late on the Sabbath Day," "By the Waters of Babylon," "The Lord is My Strength," "Lift Up Your Heads," "Break Forth into Joy," and "O

* *Crisis*, October, 1912.

Ye that Love the Lord." Among the things published since his death are his "Viking Song," best adapted for a male chorus, and a group of pianoforte and choral works.

In America the history of conscious musical effort on the part of the Negro goes back even many years before the Civil War. "Some of the most interesting music produced by the Negro slaves was handed down from the days when the French and Spanish had possession of Louisiana. From the free Negroes of Louisiana there sprang up, during slavery days, a number of musicians and artists who distinguished themselves in foreign countries to which they removed because of the prejudice which existed against colored people. Among them was Eugène Warburg, who went to Italy and distinguished himself as a sculptor. Another was Victor Séjour, who went to Paris and gained distinction as a poet and composer of tragedy. The Lambert family, consisting of seven persons, were noted as musicians. Richard Lambert, the father, was a teacher of music; Lucien Lambert, a son, after much hard study, became a composer of music. Edmund Dèdè, who was born in New Orleans

in 1829, learned while a youth to play a number of instruments. He accumulated enough money to pay his passage to France. Here he took up a special study of music, and finally became director of the orchestra of L'Alcazar, in Bordeaux, France." *

The foremost composer of the race to-day is Harry T. Burleigh, who within the last few years has won a place not only among the most prominent song-writers of America, but of the world. He has emphasized compositions in classical vein, his work displaying great technical excellence. Prominent among his later songs are "Jean," the "Saracen Songs," "One Year (1914–1915)," the "Five Songs" of Laurence Hope, set to music, "The Young Warrior" (the words of which were written by James W. Johnson), and "Passionale" (four songs for a tenor voice, the words of which were also by Mr. Johnson). Nearly two years ago, at an assemblage of the Italo-American Relief Committee at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, Mr. Amato, of the Metropolitan Opera, sang with tremendous effect, "The Young Warrior," and the Italian version has later

* Washington: "The Story of the Negro," II, 276–7.

HARRY T. BURLEIGH

been used all over Italy as a popular song in connection with the war. Of somewhat stronger quality even than most of these songs are "The Grey Wolf," to words by Arthur Symons, "The Soldier," a setting of Rupert Brooke's well known sonnet, and "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors." An entirely different division of Mr. Burleigh's work, hardly less important than his songs, is his various adaptations of the Negro melodies, especially for choral work; and he assisted Dvorak in his "New World Symphony," based on the Negro folk-songs. For his general achievement in music he was, in 1917, awarded the Spingarn Medal. His work as a singer is reserved for later treatment.

Another prominent composer is Will Marion Cook. Mr. Cook's time has been largely given to the composition of popular music; at the same time, however, he has produced numerous songs that bear the stamp of genius. In 1912 a group of his tuneful and characteristic pieces was published by Schirmer. Generally his work exhibits not only unusual melody, but also excellent technique. J. Rosamond Johnson is also a composer with many original ideas. Like Mr. Cook, for years he gave much

attention to popular music. More recently he has been director of the New York Music Settlement, the first in the country for the general cultivation and popularizing of Negro music. Among his later songs are: "I Told My Love to the Roses," and "Morning, Noon, and Night." In pure melody Mr. Johnson is not surpassed by any other musician of the race to-day. His long experience with large orchestras, moreover, has given him unusual knowledge of instrumentation. Carl Diton, organist and pianist, has so far been interested chiefly in the transcription for the organ of representative Negro melodies. "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" was published by Schirmer and followed by "Four Jubilee Songs." R. Nathaniel Dett has the merit, more than others, of attempting to write in large form. His carol, "Listen to the Lambs," is especially noteworthy. Representative of his work for the piano is his "Magnolia Suite." This was published by the Clayton F. Summy Co., of Chicago. As for the very young men of promise, special interest attaches to the work of Edmund T. Jenkins, of Charleston, S. C., who three years ago made his way to the Royal Academy

in London. Able before he left to perform brilliantly on half a dozen instruments, this young man was soon awarded a scholarship; in 1916–17 he was awarded a silver medal for excellence on the clarinet, a bronze medal for his work on the piano, and, against brilliant competition, a second prize for his original work in composition. The year also witnessed the production of his "Prélude Réligieuse" at one of the grand orchestral concerts of the Academy.

Outstanding pianists are Raymond Augustus Lawson, of Hartford, Conn., and Hazel Harrison, now of New York. Mr. Lawson is a true artist. His technique is very highly developed, and his style causes him to be a favorite concert pianist. He has more than once been a soloist at the concerts of the Hartford Philharmonic Orchestra, and has appeared on other noteworthy occasions. He conducts at Hartford one of the leading studios in New England. Miss Harrison has returned to America after years of study abroad, and now conducts a studio in New York. She was a special pupil of Busoni and has appeared in many noteworthy recitals. Another prominent

pianist is Roy W. Tibbs, now a teacher at Howard University. Helen Hagan, who a few years ago was awarded the Sanford scholarship at Yale for study abroad, has since her return from France given many excellent recitals; and Ethel Richardson, of New York, has had several very distinguished teachers and is in general one of the most promising of the younger performers. While those that have been mentioned could not possibly be overlooked, there are to-day so many noteworthy pianists that even a most competent and well-informed musician would hesitate before passing judgment upon them. Prominent among the organists is Melville Charlton, of Brooklyn, an associate of the American Guild of Organists, who has now won for himself a place among the foremost organists of the United States, and who has also done good work as a composer. He is still a young man and from him may not unreasonably be expected many years of high artistic endeavor. Two other very prominent organists are William Herbert Bush, of New London, Conn., and Frederick P. White, of Boston. Mr. Bush has for thirty years filled his position at the Second Congre-

gational Church, of New London, and has also given much time to composition. Mr. White, also a composer, for twenty-five years had charge of the instrument in the First Methodist Episcopal Church, of Charlestown, Mass. Excellent violinists are numerous, but in connection with this instrument especially must it be remarked that more and more must the line of distinction be drawn between the work of a pleasing and talented performer and the effort of a conscientious and painstaking artist. Foremost is Clarence Cameron White, of Boston. Prominent also for some years has been Joseph Douglass, of Washington. Felix Weir, of Washington and New York, has given unusual promise; and Kemper Harreld, of Chicago and Atlanta, also deserves mention. In this general sketch of those who have added to the musical achievement of the race there is a name that must not be overlooked. "Blind Tom," who attracted so much attention a generation ago, deserves notice as a prodigy rather than as a musician of solid accomplishment. His real name was Thomas Bethune, and he was born in Columbus, Ga., in 1849. He was peculiarly susceptible to the influences

of nature, and imitated on the piano all the sounds he knew. Without being able to read a note he could play from memory the most difficult compositions of Beethoven and Mendelssohn. In phonetics he was especially skillful. Before his audiences he would commonly invite any of his hearers to play new and difficult selections, and as soon as a rendering was finished he would himself play the composition without making a single mistake.

Of those who have exhibited the capabilities of the Negro voice in song it is but natural that sopranos should have been most distinguished. Even before the Civil War the race produced one of the first rank in Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, who came into prominence in 1851. This artist, born in Mississippi, was taken to Philadelphia and there cared for by a Quaker lady. Said the *Daily State Register*, of Albany, after one of her concerts: "The compass of her marvelous voice embraces twenty-seven notes, reaching from the sonorous bass of a baritone to a few notes above even Jenny Lind's highest." A voice with a range of more than three octaves naturally attracted much attention in both England and America,

and comparisons with Jenny Lind, then at the height of her great fame, were frequent. After her success on the stage Miss Greenfield became a teacher of music in Philadelphia. Twenty-five years later the Hyers Sisters, Anna and Emma, of San Francisco, started on their memorable tour of the continent, winning some of their greatest triumphs in critical New England. Anna Hyers especially was remarked as a phenomenon. Then arose Madame Selika, a cultured singer of the first rank, and one who, by her arias and operatic work generally, as well as by her mastery of language, won great success on the continent of Europe as well as in England and America. The careers of two later singers are so recent as to be still fresh in the public memory; one indeed may still be heard on the stage. It was in 1887 that Flora Batson entered on the period of her greatest success. She was a ballad singer and her work at its best was of the sort that sends an audience into the wildest enthusiasm. Her voice exhibited a compass of three octaves, from the purest, most clear-cut soprano, sweet and full, to the rich round notes of the baritone register. Three or four years later than Flora

Batson in her period of greatest artistic success was Mrs. Sissieretta Jones. The voice of this singer, when it first attracted wide attention, about 1893, commanded notice as one of unusual richness and volume, and as one exhibiting especially the plaintive quality ever present in the typical Negro voice.

At the present time Harry T. Burleigh instantly commands attention. For twenty years this singer has been the baritone soloist at St. George's Episcopal Church, New York, and for about half as long at Temple Emanu-El, the Fifth Avenue Jewish synagogue. As a concert and oratorio singer Mr. Burleigh has met with signal success. Of the younger men, Roland W. Hayes, a tenor, is outstanding. He has the temperament of an artist and gives promise of being able to justify expectations awakened by a voice of remarkable quality. Within recent years Mme. Anita Patti Brown, a product of the Chicago conservatories, has also been prominent as a concert soloist. She sings with simplicity and ease, and in her voice is a sympathetic quality that makes a ready appeal to the heart of an audience. Just at present Mme. Mayme Calloway Byron,

most recently of Chicago, seems destined within the near future to take the very high place that she deserves. This great singer has but lately returned to America after years of study and cultivation in Europe. She has sung in the principal theaters abroad and was just on the eve of filling an engagement at the Opéra Comique when the war began and forced her to change her plans.

In this general review of those who have helped to make the Negro voice famous, mention must be made of a remarkable company of singers who first made the folk-songs of the race known to the world at large. In 1871 the Fisk Jubilee Singers began their memorable progress through America and Europe, meeting at first with scorn and sneers, but before long touching the heart of the world with their strange music. The original band consisted of four young men and five young women; in the seven years of the existence of the company altogether twenty-four persons were enrolled in it. Altogether, these singers raised for Fisk University one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and secured school books, paintings, and apparatus to the value

of seven or eight thousand more. They sang in the United States, England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Switzerland, and Germany, sometimes before royalty. Since their time they have been much imitated, but hardly ever equaled, and never surpassed.

This review could hardly close without mention of at least a few other persons who have worked along distinctive lines and thus contributed to the general advance. Pedro T. Tinsley is director of the Choral Study Club of Chicago, which has done much work of real merit. Lulu Vere Childers, director of music at Howard University, is a contralto and an excellent choral director; while John W. Work, of Fisk University, by editing and directing, has done much for the preservation of the old melodies. Mrs. E. Azalia Hackley, for some years prominent as a concert soprano, has recently given her time most largely to the work of teaching and showing the capabilities of the Negro voice. Possessed of a splendid musical temperament, she has enjoyed the benefit of three years of foreign study, has published "A Guide to Voice Culture," and generally inspired many younger

singers or performers. Mrs. Maud Cuney Hare, of Boston, a concert pianist, has within the last few years elicited much favorable comment from cultured persons by her lecture-recitals dealing with Afro-American music. In these she has been assisted by William H. Richardson, baritone soloist of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Cambridge. Scattered throughout the country are many other capable teachers or promising young artists.

XIII

GENERAL PROGRESS, 1918-1921

THE three years that have passed since the present book appeared have been years of tremendous import in the life of the Negro people of the United States, as indeed in that of the whole nation. In 1918 we were in the very midst of the Great War, and not until the fall of that year were the divisions of the Students' Army Training Corps organized in our colleges; and yet already some things that marked the conflict are beginning to seem very long ago.

To some extent purely literary and artistic achievement in America was for the time being retarded, and in the case of the Negro this was especially true. The great economic problems raised by the war and its aftermath have very largely absorbed the energy of the race; and even if something

was actually done—as in a literary way—it was not easy for it to gain recognition, the cost of publication frequently being prohibitive. An enormous amount of power yearned for expression, however; scores and even hundreds of young people were laying solid foundations in different lines of art; and within the next decade we shall almost certainly witness a great fulfillment of their striving. Yet even for the time being there are some things that cannot pass unnoticed.

Of those who have received prominent mention in the present book, W. E. Burghardt DuBois and William Stanley Braithwaite especially have continued the kind of work of which they had already given indication. In 1920 appeared Dr. DuBois's "Darkwater" (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York), a strong indictment of the attitude of the white world toward the Negro and other colored peoples. This book belongs rather to the field of social discussion than to that of pure literature, and whether one prefers it to "The Souls of Black Folk" will depend largely on whether he prefers a work primarily in the wider field of politics or one

especially noteworthy for its literary quality. Mr. Braithwaite has continued the publication of his "Anthology of Magazine Verse" (now issued annually through Small, Maynard & Co., Boston), and he has also issued "The Golden Treasury of Magazine Verse" (Small, Maynard & Co., 1918), "Victory: Celebrated by Thirty-eight American Poets" (Small, Maynard & Co., 1919), as well as "The Story of the Great War" for young people (Frederick A. Stokes & Co., New York, 1919). As for the special part of the Negro in the war, importance attaches to Dr. Emmett J. Scott's "Official History of the American Negro in the World War" (Washington, 1919), while in biography outstanding is Robert Russa Moton's "Finding a Way Out" (Doubleday, Page & Co., Garden City, N. Y., 1920), a work written in modest vein and forming a distinct contribution to the history of the times.

Of those poets who have come into prominence within the period now under review first place must undoubtedly be given to Claude McKay. This man was originally a

Jamaican and his one little book was published in London; but for the last several years he has made his home in the United States and his achievement must now be identified with that of the race in this country. He has served a long apprenticeship in writing, has a firm sense of form, and only time can now give the full measure of his capabilities. His sonnet, "The Harlem Dancer," is astonishing in its artistry, and another sonnet, "If We must Die," is only less unusual in strength. Mr. McKay has recently brought together the best of his work in a slender volume, "Spring in New Hampshire, and Other Poems" (Grant Richards & Co., London, 1920). Three young men who sometimes gave interesting promise, have died within the period—Joseph S. Cotter, Jr., Roscoe C. Jamison, and Lucian B. Watkins. Cotter's "The Band of Gideon, and Other Lyrics" (The Cornhill Co., Boston, 1918) especially showed something of the freedom of genuine poetry; and mention must also be made of Charles B. Johnson's "Songs of my People" (The Cornhill Co., 1918), while

Leslie Pickney Hill's "The Wings of Oppression" (The Stratford Co., Boston, 1921) brings together some of the striking verse that this writer has contributed to different periodicals within recent years. Meanwhile Mrs. Georgia Douglas Johnson has continued the composition of her poignant lyrics, and Mrs. Alice M. Dunbar-Nelson occasionally gives demonstration of her unquestionable ability, as in the sonnet, "I had not thought of violets of late" (*Crisis*, August, 1919). If a prize were to be given for the best single poem produced by a member of the race within the last three years, the decision would probably have to rest between this sonnet and McKay's "The Harlem Dancer."

In other fields of writing special interest attaches to the composition of dramatic work. Mary Burrill and Mrs. Dunbar-Nelson especially have contributed one-act plays to different periodicals; Angelina W. Grimké has formally published "Rachel," a play in three acts (The Cornhill Co., Boston, 1920), while several teachers and advanced students at the different educa-

tional institutions are doing excellent amateur work that will certainly tell later in a larger way. R. T. Browne's "The Mystery of Space" (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1920), is an interesting excursion in metaphysics; and this book calls forth a remark about the general achievement of the race in philosophy and science. These departments are somewhat beyond the province of the present work. It is worthwhile to note, however, that while the whole field of science is just now being entered in a large way by members of the race, several of the younger men within the last decade have entered upon work of the highest order of original scholarship. No full study of this phase of development has yet been made; but for the present an article by Dr. Emmett J. Scott, "Scientific Achievements of Negroes" (*Southern Workman,* July, 1920), will probably be found an adequate summary. Maud Cuney Hare has brought out a beautiful anthology, "The Message of the Trees" (The Cornhill Co., Boston, 1919); and in the wide field of literature mention might also be made of "A Short

History of the English Drama," by the author of the present book (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1921).

The general attitude in the presentation of Negro characters in the fiction in the standard magazines of the country has shown some progress within the last three years, though this might seem to be fully offset by such burlesques as are given in the work of E. K. Means and Octavus Roy Cohen, all of which but gives further point to the essay on "The Negro in American Fiction" in this book. Quite different and of much more sympathetic temper are "The Shadow," a novel by Mary White Ovington (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1920) and George Madden Martin's "Children of the Mist," a collection of stories about the people in the lowlands of the South (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1920).

In the field of the theatre and the drama there has been progress, though the lower order of popular comedy still makes strong appeal; and of course all legitimate drama has recently had to meet the competition of moving-pictures, in connection with which

several members of the race have in one way or another won success. Outstanding is Noble M. Johnson, originally of Colorado, a man of great personal gifts and with a face and figure admirably adapted to Indian as well as Negro parts. In the realm of the spoken drama attention fixes at once upon Charles S. Gilpin, whose work is so important that it must be given special and separate treatment. It is worthy of note also that great impetus has recently been given to the construction of playhouses, the thoroughly modern Dunbar Theatre in Philadelphia being a shining example. Interesting in the general connection for the capability that many of the participants showed was the remarkable pageant, "The Open Door," first presented at Atlanta University and in the winter of 1920-21 given in various cities of the North for the benefit of this institution.

In painting and sculpture there has been much promise, but no one has appeared who has gone beyond the achievement of those persons who had already won secure position. Indeed that would be a very dif-

ficult thing to do. Mr. Tanner, Mr. Scott, Mrs. Meta Warrick Fuller, and Mrs. May Howard Jackson have all continued their work. Mr. Tanner has remained abroad, but there have recently been exhibitions of his pictures in Des Moines and Boston, and in 1919 Mrs. Jackson exhibited at the National Academy of Design and at the showing of the Society of Independent Artists at the Waldorf-Astoria. In connection with sculpture, important is a labor of love, a book, "Emancipation and the Freed in American Sculpture," by Frederick H. M. Murray (published by the author, 1733 7th St., N. W., Washington, 1916). This work contains many beautiful illustrations and deserves the attention of all who are interested in the artistic life of the Negro or in his portrayal by representative American sculptors.

In music the noteworthy fact is that there has been such general recognition of the value of Negro music as was never accorded before, and impetus toward co-operation and achievement has been given by the new National Association of Negro Mu-

sicians. R. Nathaniel Dett has been most active and has probably made the greatest advance. His compositions and the songs of Harry T. Burleigh are now frequently given a place on the programs of the foremost artists in America and Europe, and the present writer has even heard them at sea. Outstanding among smaller works by Mr. Dett is his superb "Chariot Jubilee," designed for tenor solo and chorus of mixed voices, with accompaniment of organ, piano, and orchestra. To the *Southern Workman* (April and May, 1918) this composer contributed two articles. "The Emancipation of Negro Music" and "Negro Music of the Present"; and, while continuing his studies at Harvard University in 1920, under the first of these titles he won a Bowdoin essay prize, and for a chorus without accompaniment, "Don't be weary, traveler," he also won the Francis Boott prize of $100. Melville Charlton, the distinguished organist, has gained greater maturity and in April, 1919, under the auspices of the Verdi Club, he conducted "Il Trovatore" in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria. Maud

Cuney Hare has helped to popularize Negro music by lecture-recitals and several articles in musical journals, the latter being represented by such titles as "The Drum in Africa," "The Sailor and his Songs," and "Afro-American Folk-Song Contribution" in the *Musical Observer*. In January, 1919, with the assistance of William R. Richardson, baritone, Mrs. Hare gave a lecture-recital on "Afro-American and Creole Music" in the lecture hall of the Boston Public Library, this being one of four such lectures arranged for the winter by the library trustees and marking the first time such recognition was accorded members of the race. The violinist, Clarence Cameron White, has also entered the ranks of the composers with his "Bandanna Sketches" and other productions, and to the *Musical Observer* (beginning in February, 1917) he also contributed a formal consideration of "Negro Music." Meanwhile J. Rosamond Johnson, Carl Diton, and other musicians have pressed forward; and it is to be hoped that before very long the ambitious and frequently powerful

work of H. Laurence Freeman will also win the recognition it deserves.

In the department of singing, in which the race has already done so much laudable work, we are evidently on the threshold of greater achievement than ever before. Several young men and women are just now appearing above the horizon, and only a few years are needed to see who will be able to contribute most; and what applies to the singers holds also in the case of the young violinists, pianists, and composers. Of those who have appeared within the period, Antoinette Smythe Garnes, who was graduated from the Chicago Musical College in 1919 with a diamond medal for efficiency, has been prominent among those who have awakened the highest expectation; and Marian Anderson, a remarkable contralto, and Cleota J. Collins, a soprano, have frequently appeared with distinct success. Meanwhile Roland W. Hayes. the tenor, has been winning further triumphs by his concerts in London; and generally prominent before the public in the period now under review has been Mme. Florence Cole Tal-

bert, also the winner of a diamond medal at Chicago in 1916. Mme. Talbert has been a conscientious worker; her art has now ripened; and she has justified her high position by the simplicity and ease with which she has appeared on numerous occasions, one of the most noteworthy of her concerts being that at the University of California in 1920.

A list if books bearing on the artistic life of the Negro, whether or not by members of the race, would include those below. It may be remarked that these are only some if the more representative of the productions within the last three years, and attention might also be called to the pictures of the Van Hove Statues in the Congo Museum at Brussels in the *Crisis*, September, 1920.

A Social History of the American Negro, by Benjamin Brawley. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1921.

Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent, recorded from the singing and the sayings of C. Kamba Simango, Ndau Tribe, Portuguese East Africa, and Madikane Cele, Zulu Tribe, Natal, Zululand, South Africa, by Natalie Curtis Burlin. G. Schirmer, New York and Boston, 1920.

Negro Folk-Songs: Hampton Series, recorded by Natalie Curtis Burlin, in four books. G. Schirmer, New York and Boston, 1918.

The Upward Path: A reader for colored children, compiled by Myron T. Prichard and Mary White Ovington, with an introduction by Robert R. Moton. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1920.

J. A. Lomax: Self-Pity in Negro Folk-Songs. *Nation,* August 9, 1917.

Louise Pound: Ancestry of a "Negro Spiritual." *Modern Language Notes,* November, 1918.

Natalie Curtis Burlin: Negro Music at Birth. *Music Quarterly,* January, 1919, and *Current Opinion,* March, 1919.

William Stanley Braithwaite: Some Contemporary Poets of the Negro Race. *Crisis,* April, 1919.

Elsie Clews Parsons: Joel Chandler Harris and Negro Folklore. *Dial,* May 17, 1919.

Willis Richardson: The Hope of a Negro Drama. *Crisis,* November, 1919.

N. I. White: Racial Traits in the Negro Song. *Sewanee Review,* July, 1920.

Our Debt to Negro Sculpture. *Literary Digest,* July 17, 1920.

C. Bell: Negro Sculpture. *Living Age,* September 25, 1920.

Robert T. Kerlin: Present-Day Negro Poets. *Southern Workman,* December, 1920.

Robert T. Kerlin: "Canticles of Love and Woe." *Southern Workman,* February, 1921.

XIV

CHARLES S. GILPIN

AS an illustration of the highly romantic temperament that characterizes the Negro race, and also as an instance of an artist who has worked for years to realize his possibilities, we might cite such a shining example as Charles S. Gilpin, the star of "The Emperor Jones" in the New York theatrical season of 1920-21. Here is a man who for years dreamed of attainment in the field of the legitimate drama, but who found no opening; but who with it all did not despair, and now, after years of striving and waiting, stands with his rounded experience and poise as an honor and genuine contributor to the American stage.

Charles S. Gilpin was born in Richmond, Va., the youngest child in a large family. His mother was a nurse in the city hospital;

his father a hard-working man in a steel plant. He was educated at St. Frances' Convent, where he sang well and took some part in amateur theatricals; but he was to work a long while yet before he found a chance to do the kind of work that he wanted to do, and meanwhile he was to earn his living as printer or barber or otherwise, just as occasion served. He himself has recently said, "I've been in stock companies, vaudeville, minstrel shows, and carnivals; but not until 1907 did I have an opportunity to show an audience that the Negro has dramatic talent and likes to play parts other than comedy ones."

It was in the 90's that Mr. Gilpin began his professional work as a variety performer in Richmond, and he soon joined a traveling organization. In 1903 he was one of the Gilmore Canadian Jubilee Singers; in 1905 he was with Williams and Walker; the next season with Gus Hill's "Smart Set"; and then from 1907 to 1909 with the Pekin Stock Company of Chicago. This last company consisted of about forty members, of whom eleven were finally selected

for serious drama. Mr. Gilpin was one of these; but the manager died, and once more the aspiring actor was forced back to vaudeville.

Now followed ten long years—ten years of the kind that blast and kill, and with which even the strongest man sometimes goes under. With the New York managers there was no opening. And yet sometimes there was hope—not only hope, but leadership and effort for others, as when Mr. Gilpin carried a company of his own to the Lafayette Theatre and helped to begin the production of Broadway shows. Life was leading—somewhere; but meanwhile one had to live, and the way was as yet uncertain. At last, in 1919, came a chance to play William Custis, the old Negro in Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln."

The part was not a great one. It was still bound by racial limitations and Custis appeared in only one scene. Nevertheless the work was serious; here at least was opportunity.

In the early fall of 1920 Mr. Gilpin was still playing Custis and helping to make

the play a success. Meanwhile, however, Eugene O'Neill, one of the most original playwrights in the country, had written "The Emperor Jones"; and Charles S. Gilpin was summoned to the part of the star.

There were many who regretted to see him leave "Abraham Lincoln," and some indeed who wondered if he did the wise thing. To Charles Gilpin, however, came the decision that sooner or later must be faced by every artist, and indeed by every man in any field of endeavor—either to rest on safe and assumed achievement, or to believe in one's own self, take the great risk, and launch out into the unknown. He choose to believe in himself. His work was one of the features of the New York theatrical season of 1920-21, and at the annual dinner of the Drama League in 1921 he was one of the ten guests who were honored as having contributed most to the American theatre within the year.

The play on which this success has been based is a highly original and dramatic study of panic and fear. The Emperor Jones is a Negro who has broken out of

jail in the United States and escaped to what is termed a "West Indian Island not yet self-determined by white marines." Here he is sufficiently bold and ingenious to make himself ruler within two years. He moves unharmed among his sullen subjects by virtue of a legend of his invention that only a silver bullet can harm him, but at length when he has reaped all the riches in sight, he deems it advisable to flee. As the play begins, the measured sound of a beating tom-tom in the hills gives warning that the natives are in conclave, using all kinds of incantations to work themselves up to the point of rebellion. Nightfall finds the Emperor at the edge of a forest where he has food hidden and through whose trackless waste he knows a way to safety and freedom. His revolver carries five bullets for his pursuers and a silver one for himself in case of need. Bold and adventurous, he plunges into the jungle at sunset; but at dawn, half-crazed, naked, and broken, he stumbles back to the starting-place only to find the natives quietly waiting for him there. Now follows a vivid por-

trayal of strange sounds and shadows, with terrible visions from the past. As the Emperor's fear quickens, the forest seems filled with threatening people who stare at and bid for him. Finally, shrieking at the worst vision of all, he is driven back to the clearing and to his death, the tom-tom beating ever nearer and faster according as his panic grows.

To the work of this remarkable part—which is so dominating in the play that it has been called a dramatic monologue—Mr. Gilpin brings the resources of a matured and thoroughly competent actor. His performance is powerful and richly imaginative, and only other similarly strong plays are now needed for the further enlargement of the art of an actor who has already shown himself capable of the hardest work and the highest things.

For once the critics were agreed. Said Alexander Woolcott in the *New York Times* with reference to those who produced the play: "They have acquired an actor, one who has it in him to invoke the pity and the terror and the indescribable foreboding

which are part of the secret of 'The Emperor Jones.'" Kenneth MacGowan wrote in the *Globe;* "Gilpin's is a sustained and splendid piece of acting. The moment when he raises his naked body against the moonlit sky, beyond the edge of the jungle, and prays, is such a dark lyric of the flesh, such a cry of the primitive being, as I have never seen in the theatre"; and in the *Tribune* Heywood Broun said of the actor: "He sustains the succession of scenes in monologue not only because his voice is one of a gorgeous natural quality, but because he knows just what to do with it. All the notes are there and he has also an extraordinary facility for being in the right place at the right time." Such comments have been re-echoed by the thousands who have witnessed Mr. Gilpin's thrilling work, and in such a record as this he deserves further credit as one who has finally bridged the chasm between popular comedy and the legitimate drama, and who thus by sheer right of merit steps into his own as the foremost actor that the Negro race has produced within recent years.

APPENDIX

1. THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN FICTION

EVER since Sydney Smith sneered at American books a hundred years ago, honest critics have asked themselves if the literature of the United States was not really open to the charge of provincialism. Within the last year or two the argument has been very much revived; and an English critic, Mr. Edward Garnett, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly*, has pointed out that with our predigested ideas and made-to-order fiction we not only discourage individual genius, but make it possible for the multitude to think only such thoughts as have passed through a sieve. Our most popular novelists, and sometimes our most respectable writers, see only the sensation that is uppermost for the moment in the mind of the crowd—divorce, graft, tainted meat or money—and they proceed to cut the cloth of their fiction accordingly. Mr. Owen Wister, a "regular practitioner" of the novelist's art, in substance admitting the weight of these charges, lays the blame on our crass democracy which utterly refuses to do its own thinking and which is satisfied only with the tinsel and gewgaws and hobbyhorses of literature. And no theme has suffered so much from the coarseness of the mob-spirit in literature as that of the Negro.

As a matter of fact, the Negro in his problems

and strivings offers to American writers the greatest opportunity that could possibly be given to them to-day. It is commonly agreed that only one other large question, that of the relations of capital and labor, is of as much interest to the American public; and even this great issue fails to possess quite the appeal offered by the Negro from the social standpoint. One can only imagine what a Victor Hugo, detached and philosophical, would have done with such a theme in a novel. When we see what actually has been done—how often in the guise of fiction a writer has preached a sermon or shouted a political creed, or vented his spleen—we are not exactly proud of the art of novel-writing as it has been developed in the United States of America. Here was opportunity for tragedy, for comedy, for the subtle portrayal of all the relations of man with his fellow man, for faith and hope and love and sorrow. And yet, with the Civil War fifty years in the distance, not one novel or one short story of the first rank has found its inspiration in this great theme. Instead of such work we have consistently had traditional tales, political tracts, and lurid melodramas.

Let us see who have approached the theme, and just what they have done with it, for the present leaving out of account all efforts put forth by Negro writers themselves.

The names of four exponents of Southern life come at once to mind—George W. Cable, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, and Thomas Dixon; and at once, in their outlook and method of work, the first two become separate from the

last two. Cable and Harris have looked toward the past, and have embalmed vanished or vanishing types. Mr. Page and Mr. Dixon, with their thought on the present (though for the most part they portray the recent past), have used the novel as a vehicle for political propaganda.

It was in 1879 that "Old Creole Days" evidenced the advent of a new force in American literature; and on the basis of this work, and of "The Grandissimes" which followed, Mr. Cable at once took his place as the foremost portrayer of life in old New Orleans. By birth, by temperament, and by training he was thoroughly fitted for the task to which he set himself. His mother was from New England, his father of the stock of colonial Virginia; and the stern Puritanism of the North was mellowed by the gentler influences of the South. Moreover, from his long apprenticeship in newspaper work in New Orleans he had received abundantly the knowledge and training necessary for his work. Setting himself to a study of the Negro of the old régime, he made a specialty of the famous—and infamous—quadroon society of Louisiana of the third and fourth decades of the last century. And excellent as was his work, turning his face to the past in manner as well as in matter, from the very first he raised the question propounded by this paper. In his earliest volume there was a story entitled "'Tite Poulette," the heroine of which was a girl amazingly fair, the supposed daughter of one Madame John. A young Dutchman fell in love with 'Tite Poulette, championed her cause at all times, suffered a beating and stabbing for her,

and was by her nursed back to life and love. In the midst of his perplexity about joining himself to a member of another race, came the word from Madame John that the girl was not her daughter, but the child of yellow fever patients whom she had nursed until they died, leaving their infant in her care. Immediately upon the publication of this story, the author received a letter from a young woman who had actually lived in very much the same situation as that portrayed in "'Tite Poulette," telling him that his story was not true to life and that he knew it was not, for Madame John really *was* the mother of the heroine. Accepting the criticism, Mr. Cable set about the composition of "Madame Delphine," in which the situation is somewhat similar, but in which at the end the mother tamely makes a confession to a priest. What is the trouble? The artist is so bound by circumstances and hemmed in by tradition that he simply has not the courage to launch out into the deep and work out his human problems for himself. Take a representative portrait from "The Grandissimes":

> Clemence had come through ages of African savagery, through fires that do not refine, but that blunt and blast and blacken and char; starvation, gluttony, drunkenness, thirst, drowning, nakedness, dirt, fetichism, debauchery, slaughter, pestilence, and the rest—she was their heiress; they left her the cinders of human feelings. . . . She had had children of assorted colors—had one with her now, the black boy that brought the basil to Joseph; the others were here and there, some in the Grandissime households or field-gangs, some elsewhere within occasional

sight, some dead, some not accounted for. Husbands—like the Samaritan woman's. We know she was a constant singer and laugher.

Very brilliant of course; and yet Clemence is a relic, not a prophecy.

Still more of a relic is Uncle Remus. For decades now, this charming old Negro has been held up to the children of the South as the perfect expression of the beauty of life in the glorious times "befo' de wah," when every Southern gentleman was suckled at the bosom of a "black mammy." Why should we not occasionally attempt to paint the Negro of the new day—intelligent, ambitious, thrifty, manly? Perhaps he is not so poetic; but certainly the human element is greater.

To the school of Cable and Harris belong also of course Miss Grace King and Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart, a thoroughly representative piece of work being Mrs. Stuart's "Uncle 'Riah's Christmas Eve." Other more popular writers of the day, Miss Mary Johnston and Miss Ellen Glasgow for instance, attempt no special analysis of the Negro. They simply take him for granted as an institution that always has existed and always will exist, as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, from the first flush of creation to the sounding of the trump of doom.

But more serious is the tone when we come to Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon. We might tarry for a few minutes with Mr. Page to listen to more such tales as those of Uncle Remus; but we must turn to living issues. Times have changed. The grandson of Uncle Remus does not

feel that he must stand with his hat in his hand when he is in our presence, and he even presumes to help us in the running of our government. This will never do; so in "Red Rock" and "The Leopard's Spots" it must be shown that he should never have been allowed to vote anyway, and those honorable gentlemen in the Congress of the United States in the year 1865 did not know at all what they were about. Though we are given the characters and setting of a novel, the real business is to show that the Negro has been the "sentimental pet" of the nation all too long. By all means let us have an innocent white girl, a burly Negro, and a burning at the stake, or the story would be incomplete.

We have the same thing in "The Clansman," a "drama of fierce revenge." But here we are concerned very largely with the blackening of a man's character. Stoneman (Thaddeus Stevens very thinly disguised) is himself the whole Congress of the United States. He is a gambler, and "spends a part of almost every night at Hall & Pemberton's Faro Place on Pennsylvania Avenue." He is hysterical, "drunk with the joy of a triumphant vengeance." "The South is conquered soil," he says to the President (a mere figure-head, by the way), "I mean to blot it from the map." Further: "It is but the justice and wisdom of heaven that the Negro shall rule the land of his bondage. It is the only solution of the race problem. Wait until I put a ballot in the hand of every Negro, and a bayonet at the breast of every white man from the James to the Rio Grande." Stoneman, moreover,

has a mistress, a mulatto woman, a "yellow vampire" who dominates him completely. "Senators, representatives, politicians of low and high degree, artists, correspondents, foreign ministers, and cabinet officers hurried to acknowledge their fealty to the uncrowned king, and hail the strange brown woman who held the keys of his house as the first lady of the land." This, let us remember, was for some months the best-selling book in the United States. A slightly altered version of it has very recently commanded such prices as were never before paid for seats at a moving-picture entertainment; and with "The Traitor" and "The Southerner" it represents our most popular treatment of the gravest social question in American life! "The Clansman" is to American literature exactly what a Louisiana mob is to American democracy. Only too frequently, of course, the mob represents us all too well.

Turning from the longer works of fiction to the short story, I have been interested to see how the matter has been dealt with here. For purposes of comparison I have selected from ten representative periodicals as many distinct stories, no one of which was published more than ten years ago; and as these are in almost every case those stories that first strike the eye in a periodical index, we may assume that they are thoroughly typical. The ten are: "Shadow," by Harry Stillwell Edwards, in the *Century* (December, 1906); "Callum's Co'tin': A Plantation Idyl," by Frank H. Sweet, in the *Craftsman* (March, 1907); "His Excellency the Governor," by L. M. Cooke, in *Putnam's* (Febru-

ary, 1908); "The Black Drop," by Margaret Deland in *Collier's Weekly* (May 2 and 9, 1908); "Jungle Blood," by Elmore Elliott Peake, in *McClure's* (September, 1908); "The Race-Rioter," by Harris Merton Lyon, in the *American* (February, 1910); "Shadow," by Grace MacGowan Cooke and Alice MacGowan, in *Everybody's* (March, 1910); "Abram's Freedom," by Edna Turpin, in the *Atlantic* (September, 1912); "A Hypothetical Case," by Norman Duncan, in *Harper's* (June, 1915); and "The Chalk Game," by L. B. Yates, in the *Saturday Evening Post* (June 5, 1915). For high standards of fiction I think we may safely say that, all in all, the periodicals here mentioned are representative of the best that America has to offer. In some cases the story cited is the only one on the Negro question that a magazine has published within the decade.

"Shadow" (in the *Century*) is the story of a Negro convict who for a robbery committed at the age of fourteen was sentenced to twenty years of hard labor in the mines of Alabama. An accident disabled him, however, and prevented his doing the regular work for the full period of his imprisonment. At twenty he was a hostler, looking forward in despair to the fourteen years of confinement still waiting for him. But the three little girls of the prison commissioner visit the prison. Shadow performs many little acts of kindness for them, and their hearts go out to him. They storm the governor and the judge for his pardon, and present the Negro with his freedom as a Christmas gift. The story is not long, but it strikes a note of genuine pathos.

"Callum's Co'tin'" is concerned with a hard-working Negro, a blacksmith, nearly forty, who goes courting the girl who called at his shop to get a trinket mended for her mistress. At first he makes himself ridiculous by his finery; later he makes the mistake of coming to a crowd of merrymakers in his working clothes. More and more, however, he storms the heart of the girl, who eventually capitulates. From the standpoint simply of craftsmanship, the story is an excellent piece of work.

"His Excellency the Governor" deals with the custom on Southern plantations of having, in imitation of the white people, a Negro "governor" whose duty it was to settle minor disputes. At the death of old Uncle Caleb, who for years had held this position of responsibility, his son Jubal should have been the next in order. He was likely to be superseded, however, by loud-mouthed Sambo, though urged to assert himself by Maria, his wife, an old house-servant who had no desire whatever to be defeated for the place of honor among the women by Sue, a former field-hand. At the meeting where all was to be decided, however, Jubal with the aid of his fiddle completely confounded his rival and won. There are some excellent touches in the story; but, on the whole, the composition is hardly more than fair in literary quality.

"The Black Drop," throughout which we see the hand of an experienced writer, analyzes the heart of a white boy who is in love with a girl who is almost white, and who when the test confronts him suffers the tradition that binds him to get the better of his heart. "But you will still believe that

I love you?" he asks, ill at ease as they separate. "No, of course I can not believe that," replies the girl.

"Jungle Blood" is the story of a simple-minded, simple-hearted Negro of gigantic size who in a moment of fury kills his pretty wife and the white man who has seduced her. The tone of the whole may be gleaned from the description of Moss Harper's father: "An old darky sat drowsing on the stoop. There was something ape-like about his long arms, his flat, wide-nostriled nose, and the mat of gray wool which crept down his forehead to within two inches of his eyebrows."

"The Race-Rioter" sets forth the stand of a brave young sheriff to protect his prisoner, a Negro boy, accused of the assault and murder of a little white girl. Hank Egge tries by every possible subterfuge to defeat the plans of a lynching party, and finally dies riddled with bullets as he is defending his prisoner. The story is especially remarkable for the strong and sympathetic characterization of such contrasting figures as young Egge and old Dikeson, the father of the dead girl.

"Shadow" (in *Everybody's*) is a story that depends for its force very largely upon incident. It studies the friendship of a white boy, Ranny, and a black boy, Shadow, a relationship that is opposed by both the Northern white mother and the ambitious and independent Negro mother. In a fight, Shad breaks a collar-bone for Ranny; later he saves him from drowning. In the face of Ranny's white friends, all the harsher side of the problem is seen; and yet the human element is

strong beneath it all. The story, not without considerable merit as it is, would have been infinitely stronger if the friendship of the two boys had been pitched on a higher plane. As it is, Shad is very much like a dog following his master.

"Abram's Freedom" is at the same time one of the most clever and one of the most provoking stories with which we have to deal. It is a perfect example of how one may walk directly up to the light and then deliberately turn his back upon it. The story is set just before the Civil War. It deals with the love of the slave Abram for a free young woman, Emmeline. "All his life he had heard and used the phrase 'free nigger' as a term of contempt. What, then, was this vague feeling, not definite enough yet to be a wish or even a longing?" So far, so good. Emmeline inspires within her lover the highest ideals of manhood, and he becomes a hostler in a livery-stable, paying to his master so much a year for his freedom. Then comes the astounding and forced conclusion. At the very moment when, after years of effort, Emmeline has helped her husband to gain his freedom (and when all the slaves are free as a matter of fact by virtue of the Emancipation Proclamation), Emmeline, whose husband has special reason to be grateful to his former master, says to the lady of the house: "Me an' Abram ain't got nothin' to do in dis worl' but to wait on you an' master."

In "A Hypothetical Case" we again see the hand of a master-craftsman. Is a white boy justified in shooting a Negro who has offended him? The white father is not quite at ease, quibbles a

good deal, but finally says Yes. The story, however, makes it clear that the Negro did not strike the boy. He was a hermit living on the Florida coast and perfectly abased when he met Mercer and his two companions. When the three boys pursued him and finally overtook him, the Negro simply held the hands of Mercer until the boy had recovered his temper. Mercer in his rage really struck himself.

"The Chalk Game" is the story of a little Negro jockey who wins a race in Louisville only to be drugged and robbed by some "flashlight" Negroes who send him to Chicago. There he recovers his fortunes by giving to a group of gamblers the correct "tip" on another race, and he makes his way back to Louisville much richer by his visit. Throughout the story emphasis is placed upon the superstitious element in the Negro race, an element readily considered by men who believe in luck.

Of these ten stories, only five strike out with even the slightest degree of independence. "Shadow" (in the *Century*) is not a powerful piece of work, but it is written in tender and beautiful spirit. "The Black Drop" is a bold handling of a strong situation. "The Race-Rioter" also rings true, and in spite of the tragedy there is optimism in this story of a man who is not afraid to do his duty. "Shadow" (in *Everybody's*) awakens all sorts of discussion, but at least attempts to deal honestly with a situation that might arise in any neighborhood at any time. "A Hypothetical Case" is the most tense and independent story in the list.

On the other hand, "Callum's Co'tin'" and

"His Excellency the Governor," bright comedy though they are, belong, after all, to the school of Uncle Remus. "Jungle Blood" and "The Chalk Game" belong to the class that always regards the Negro as an animal, a minor, a plaything—but never as a man. "Abram's Freedom," exceedingly well written for two-thirds of the way, falls down hopelessly at the end. Many old Negroes after the Civil War preferred to remain with their former masters; but certainly no young woman of the type of Emmeline would sell her birthright for a mess of pottage.

Just there is the point. That the Negro is ever to be taken seriously is incomprehensible to some people. It is the story of "The Man that Laughs" over again. The more Gwynplaine protests, the more outlandish he becomes to the House of Lords.

We are simply asking that those writers of fiction who deal with the Negro shall be thoroughly honest with themselves, and not remain forever content to embalm old types and work over outworn ideas. Rather should they sift the present and forecast the future. But of course the editors must be considered. The editors must give their readers what the readers want; and when we consider the populace, of course we have to reckon with the mob. And the mob does not find anything very attractive about a Negro who is intelligent, cultured, manly, and who does not smile. It will be observed that in no one of the ten stories above mentioned, not even in one of the five remarked most favorably, is there a Negro of this type. Yet he is obliged to come. America has yet to reckon with

him. The day of Uncle Remus as well as of Uncle Tom is over.

Even now, however, there are signs of better things. Such an artist as Mr. Howells, for instance, has once or twice dealt with the problem in excellent spirit. Then there is the work of the Negro writers themselves. The numerous attempts in fiction made by them have most frequently been open to the charge of crassness already considered; but Paul Laurence Dunbar, Charles W. Chesnutt, and W. E. Burghardt DuBois have risen above the crowd. Mr. Dunbar, of course, was better in poetry than in prose. Such a short story as "Jimsella," however, exhibited considerable technique. "The Uncalled" used a living topic treated with only partial success. But for the most part, Mr. Dunbar's work looked toward the past. Somewhat stronger in prose is Mr. Chesnutt. "The Marrow of Tradition" is not much more than a political tract, and "The Colonel's Dream" contains a good deal of preaching; but "The House Behind the Cedars" is a real novel. Among his short stories, "The Bouquet" may be remarked for technical excellence, and "The Wife of His Youth" for a situation of unusual power. Dr. DuBois's "The Quest of the Silver Fleece" contains at least one strong dramatic situation, that in which Bles probes the heart of Zora; but the author is a sociologist and essayist rather than a novelist. The grand epic of the race is yet to be produced.

Some day we shall work out the problems of our great country. Some day we shall not have a state government set at defiance, and the massacre

of Ludlow. Some day our little children will not slave in mines and mills, but will have some chance at the glory of God's creation; and some day the Negro will cease to be a problem and become a human being. Then, in truth, we shall have the Promised Land. But until that day comes let those who mold our ideals and set the standards of our art in fiction at least be honest with themselves and independent. Ignorance we may for a time forgive; but a man has only himself to blame if he insists on not seeing the sunrise in the new day.

2. STUDY OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE following bibliography, while aiming at a fair degree of completeness for books and articles coming within the scope of this volume, cannot be finally complete, because so to make it would be to cover very largely the great subject of the Negro Problem, only one phase of which is here considered. The aim is constantly to restrict the discussion to that of the literary and artistic life of the Negro; and books primarily on economic, social, or theological themes, however interesting within themselves, are generally not included. Booker T. Washington may seem to be an exception to this; but the general importance of the books of this author would seem to demand their inclusion, especially as some of them touch directly on the subject of present interest.

I

BOOKS BY SIX MOST PROMINENT AUTHORS

WHEATLEY, PHILLIS (Mrs. Peters).

Poem on the Death of the Reverend George Whitefield. Boston, 1770.

Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral. London and Boston, 1773.

Elegy Sacred to the Memory of Dr. Samuel Cooper. Boston, 1784.

Liberty and Peace. Boston, 1784.

Letters, edited by Charles Deane. Boston, 1864.

(Note.—The bibliography of the work of Phillis Wheatley is now a study within itself. Titles just enumerated are only for what may be regarded as the most important original sources. The important volume, that of 1773, is now very rare and valuable. Numerous reprints have been made, among them the following: Philadelphia, 1774; Philadelphia, 1786; Albany, 1793; Philadelphia, 1801; Walpole, N. H., 1802; Hartford, 1804; Halifax, 1813; "New England," 1816; Denver, 1887; Philadelphia, 1909 (the last being the accessible reprint by R. R. and C. C. Wright, A. M. E. Book Concern). Note also Memoir of Phillis Wheatley, by B. B. Thatcher, Boston, 1834; and Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley (memoir by Margaretta Matilda Odell), Boston, 1834, 1835, and 1838, the three editions in rapid succession being due to the anti-slavery agitation. Not the least valuable part of Deane's 1864 edition of the Letters is the sketch of Phillis Wheatley, by Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, which it contains. This was first printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 21, 1863. It is brief, but contains several facts not to be found elsewhere. Duyckinck's Cyclopædia of American Literature (1855 and 1866) gave a good review and reprinted from the *Pennsylvania Magazine* the correspondence

with Washington, and the poem to Washington, also "Liberty and Peace." Also important for reference is Oscar Wegelin's Compilation of the Titles of Volumes of Verse—Early American Poetry, New York, 1903. Note also The Life and Works of Phillis Wheatley, by G. Herbert Renfro, edited by Leila Amos Pendleton, Washington, 1916. The whole matter of bibliography has recently been exhaustively studied in Heartman's Historical Series, in beautiful books of limited editions, as follows: (1) Phillis Wheatley: A Critical Attempt and a Bibliography of Her Writings, by Charles Fred Heartman, New York, 1915; (2) Phillis Wheatley: Poems and Letters. First Collected Edition. Edited by Charles Fred Heartman, with an Appreciation by Arthur A. Schomburg. New York, 1915; (3) Six Broadsides relating to Phillis Wheatley, New York, 1915. These books are of the first order of importance, and yet they awaken one or two questions. One wonders why "To Mæcenas," "On Virtue," and "On Being Brought from Africa to America," all very early work, were placed near the end of the poems in "Poems and Letters"; nor is the relation between "To a Clergyman on the Death of His Lady," and "To the Rev. Mr. Pitkin on the Death of His Lady," made clear, the two poems, evidently different versions of the same subject, being placed pages apart. The great merit of the book, however, is that it adds to "Poems on Various Subjects" the four other poems not generally accessible: (1) To His Excellency,

George Washington; (2) On Major-General Lee; (3) Liberty and Peace; (4) An Elegy Sacred to the Memory of Dr. Samuel Cooper. The first of Heartman's three volumes gives a list of books containing matter on Phillis Wheatley. To this may now be added the following magazine articles, none of which contain matter primarily original: (1) *Christian Examiner*, Vol. XVI, p. 169 (Review by W. J. Snelling of the 1834 edition of the poems); (2) *Knickerbocker*, Vol. IV, p. 85; (3) *North American Review*, Vol. 68, p. 418 (by Mrs. E. F. Ellet); (4) *London Athenæum* for 1835, p. 819 (by Rev. T. Flint); (5) *Historical Magazine* for 1858, p. 178; (6) *Catholic World*, Vol. 39, p. 484, July, 1884; (7) *Chautauquan*, Vol. 18, p. 599, February, 1894 (by Pamela McArthur Cole).

DUNBAR, PAUL LAURENCE.

Life and Works, edited by Lida Keck Wiggins. J. L. Nichols & Co., Naperville, Ill., 1907.

The following, with the exception of the sketch at the end, were all published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.

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Lyrics of the Hearthside, 1899.
Lyrics of Love and Laughter, 1903.
Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow, 1905.
Complete Poems, 1913.

Specially Illustrated Volumes of Poems:

Poems of Cabin and Field, 1899.

Candle-Lightin' Time, 1901.
When Malindy Sings, 1903.
Li'l' Gal, 1904.
Howdy, Honey, Howdy, 1905.
Joggin' Erlong, 1906.
Speakin' o' Christmas, 1914.

Novels:

The Uncalled, 1896.
The Love of Landry, 1900.
The Fanatics, 1901.
The Sport of the Gods, 1902.

Stories and Sketches:

Folks from Dixie, 1898.
The Strength of Gideon, and Other Stories, 1900.
In Old Plantation Days, 1903.
The Heart of Happy Hollow, 1904.
Uncle Eph's Christmas, a one-act musical sketch, Washington, 1900.

CHESNUTT, CHARLES WADDELL.

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The Wife of His Youth, and Other Stories of the Color-line. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1899.
The House Behind the Cedars (novel). Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1900.
The Marrow of Tradition (novel). Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1901.
The Colonel's Dream (novel). Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, 1905.

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The Quest of the Silver Fleece (novel). A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1911.
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